PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED News, Fearless Views

RESCUE MISSION Members of the Coast Guard search-and-rescue team in a rubber boat rush to the site where the passenger ferry MV Balaw 9 sank off the coast of Batangas. The photo was released by the Coast Guard. AP

12 bodies inside wreck

Victims in cabins at bottom of sea

By Kristine L. Alave in Manila
Marrah Erika Lozaba and Madonna T. Virola
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TWO TODDLERS WERE AMONG AT LEAST 12 bodies found in the wreckage of the MV Carolyn B that was sitting upright on the sea floor at the mouth of Manila Bay, according to a civilian volunteer that conducted a deep-sea dive on the site yesterday.

The wooden-hulled ferry sank after it smashed into a steel-hulled fishing vessel on Christmas Eve 3 nautical miles from Limbones Island off Mayagnodon, Cavite.

The bodies of the rest of the 24 people missing may be trapped inside still-unopened cabins of Carolyn B, said the Coast Guard spokesperson, Lt. Cmdr. Armand Balilo.

The discovery of the bodies came as two Coast Guard officers at the Cebgem City port, who allowed the MV Balaw 9 to sail, were relieved to give way to the investigation of the ship's sinking.

The roll-on, roll-of vessel capsized off Isla Verde on the night of Dec. 24, killing at least six of its 124 passengers and crew.

12 BODIES A6

PRAYON ILLUSTRATED An evacuee carrying her child stands by a wall with a painting of an erupting Mayon Volcano at Travesia Elementary School in Barangay Manoeks, Guinobatan, Albay. MIKE ALQUINTO

No Mayon lull, says Phivolcs

By Roy M. Nawal
Inquirer Southern Luzon
and Nikko Dizon in Manila

LEGAZPI CITY—VOLCANOLogists yesterday told Mount Mayon's ash explosions were becoming stronger and warned evacuees trying to go back to their homes in the danger zones not to be misled by the volcano's supposed lull.

A volcanology team monitoring Mayon aired the warning as the flow of flaming lava rolled farther down the slopes and began scorching vegetations.

In a further security precaution, soldiers and policemen have been ordered to stop foreigners from getting close to the volcano after two tourists were seen inside the so-called danger zone.

And as the nation prepared to celebrate the New Year with a bang, Gov. Joey Salceda ordered the enforcement of a ban on the use and sale of firecrackers, saying he did not want to see any evacuation center being eaten up by flames while the women is in

NO MAYON A6

So who's sitting on pending bills?

By Christian V. Esguerra
and Christine O. Avendaño

LAWMAKERS ARE SITTING ON proposed legislation intended to avoid overlapping functions of maritime agencies and to reduce sea tragedies, Malacañang said yesterday after the back-to-back sinking of ferries that claimed the lives of at least 28 people.

But Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said President Macapagal-Arroyo had not signed into law another

SO WHO'S A6

Voters' surge seen on last day of list-up

By Kristine L. Alave

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR THE last day of voter registration.

While the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is all geared up for an anticipated last-minute surge in registrations, the turnout in the extended exercise directed by the Supreme Court has so far been slow.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo said local offices had reported that there were not too many applications in the extended schedule.

"Based on reports, there are very few registrants," Melo said. He doubted if the Comelec would get one million new voters in the last five days of registration.

Eligible new voters have to personally submit their application and present government identification cards to their local poll offices.

The extended registration, which was ordered by the

VOTERS A11

Gloria, politicos urged: Don't lie on Rizal Day

By Jerry E. Esplanada

REMEMBER THE RIZAL DAY RITES IN 2002 in which President Macapagal-Arroyo told the "Filipino in-" meaning that she would not run for president in the 2004 elections?

According to the head of a Rizalist group and a militant backers, Ms Arroyo has forfeited her

CLOWN A11

Travel woes: Long delays, tight security

CHICAGO—STRESSED PASsengers at airports in the United States and around the world faced heightened security on Sunday on the holiday season's busiest travel day following a botched attempt to blow up a US airliner.

Dino Melchior, 30, was stuck in Chicago with his parents and two children after his flight was delayed by two hours due to heightened security in Toronto—and they missed their connecting flight to Hawaii.

"Apparently a new directive came out for people to be physically patted down and they weren't prepared for it," Melchior said, as his teenage son waited in line to retrieve their luggage. "I've never seen lines like that."

The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) said US-bound international travelers should expect tougher screening measures, including pat-downs and bag searches. Passengers were advised to check into airports earlier.

Melchior described a chaotic scene as security officers without megaphones tried to organize the massive crowd at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

Each carry-on bag was emptied and searched. People were

TRAVEL WOES A6

AMPATUANS OF MAGUINDANAO

Patriarch gave GMA big win that fueled his rise to power

By Manny Pinol
(Second of two parts)

(The writer is a former journalist, a three-term governor of North Cotabato and incumbent vice governor of the province)

COMMENTARY

THE POLITICAL POWER AND influence of Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. reached great heights in the 2004 presidential election when he engineered a lopsided victory in Maguindanao for President Macapagal-Arroyo against popular actor Fernando Poe Jr.

It was undoubtedly a feat that won for Ms Arroyo the presidency, never mind the charges of massive cheating. The fact remains that the patriarch of the Ampatuan clan used every means fair or foul to show to Malacañang that he could deliver.

This entered his own political ascendancy until the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people. His family has been tagged as the mastermind of the worst political violence in the nation's history.

Ampatuan was unopposed for a second term as governor of Maguindanao in the 2004 election.

PATRIARCH A11

MASSACRE PROBE Vice Mayor Esmael Mangudadatu of Buluan, Maguindanao, attends the preliminary investigation of the massacre suspects. AP/CNN

President wants justice done by June

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo wants justice served in the massacre of 57 people last month in Maguindanao before her term ends in June, Malacañang said yesterday.

"The President would like to be able to have this thing resolved before the cops down," Gary Olivar, her deputy spokesperson, told reporters. "The important thing is to administer justice impartially.

PRESIDENT A11

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2009

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Partly cloudy with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening. Light to moderate winds from the northeast to east. Slight to moderate seas. Temperature: 24 to 32 degrees Celsius; Manila, 25 to 32 degrees Celsius.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Metro Manila	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Iloilo	Partly cloudy
Pagudpud	Mostly cloudy	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Mostly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly cloudy	Dipolog	Mostly cloudy
Naga City	Partly cloudy	Cotabato	Mostly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Virac	Partly cloudy	Davao	Mostly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

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AT THE MAAK OF SAWAI in Barangay Paera, Legazpi City, an animal is led out of harm's way as part of the evacuation of residents fleeing the eruption of Mayon Volcano. | MIKKO ASIS

Pinoys see hope in 2010–SWS

MOST FILIPINOS WILL WELCOME THE NEW Year with hope rather than fear, according to the latest Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

Eight-nine percent of those interviewed by the SWS from Dec. 5 to Dec. 10 expressed hope (68.8, while 13 percent said they harbored fear for the coming year.

SWS asked its respondents: "Is it with hope or fear that you enter the coming year?"

The figures of hopeful Filipinos was slightly lower than in previous three years (91 percent in both 2008 and 2007, and 92 percent in 2006), the SWS said yesterday in its media release.

Nevertheless, the number of hopeful Filipinos has remained high since 2000 when the SWS first conducted a poll on hope and fear about the New Year.

Hope for the New Year among Filipinos reached its highest at 95 percent in December 2002 and posted its lowest at 81 percent in December 2004, according to the SWS.

In Germany, where the survey on hopes for the New Year originated, the percentage of hopeful citizens never exceeded 80 percent since 1994, despite the fact that it is one of the world's richest countries.

In contrast, hope for the New Year remained high in all areas in the country: 90 percent in Luzon, outside Manila, 88 percent in the Visayas, and 87 percent in both Mindanao and Metro Manila in 2009 alone.

Compared to 2008 figures, hope for the New Year hardly changed in Metro Manila (89 to 87 percent) and Luzon outside Metro Manila (92 to 90 percent).

Meanwhile, hope fell in the Visayas (from 94 percent to 87 percent) as well as Mindanao (from 92 percent to 87 percent). Fear for the coming year increased in both the Visayas (from 6 percent to 11 percent) and Mindanao (from 8 percent to 13 percent).

Among classes, hope for the New Year was slightly higher among "middle-to-upper" classes ABC (91 percent) than among the "mass" class D (89 percent) and "very poor" class E (87 percent), the SWS said in its statement.

Last year's figures were 92 percent for class ABC, 92 percent for class D, and 90 percent for class E.

Among its Muslim respondents, 71 percent said they would enter the New Year with fear, the SWS said. This figure was three times more than for Christians (18 percent) and the Roman Catholics (14 percent).

The survey questions on hope and fear about the New Year was patterned after polls conducted annually by the Almorbech Institute of Demoscopy, a pioneering opinion research center in Germany.

The nonrandomized survey was conducted nationwide among 2,100 adults, using face-to-face interviews. It has a margin of error of plus/minus 2.2 percent. *Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research*

BISHOP'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

'Despite a year of tragedies, Pinoys shouldn't lose hope'

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—DESPITE A YEAR OF tragedies, most notably the Maguindanao massacre that left 57 dead, Filipinos should not lose hope and instead, take inspiration from the acts of courage and heroism, by ordinary citizens, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said.

In his New Year message on Tuesday, Lagdameo, immediate past president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said 2009 would leave behind a "legacy of problems, tragedies and disasters."

They include "the haunting recovery of unsolved corruption," the erosion of typhoons and the Maguindanao massacre.

"It is no wonder that concerned people sometimes cry out and demand for solutions. This, sadly will be carried over to 2010," Lagdameo said.

"Our heroes are coming from the ordinary citizenry, who hold no political power, but have brought hope on to our country through their personal greatness and talents," Lagdameo said.

He cited the heroism of 18-year-old construction worker Rhodora Magallanes who died saving more than 30 people from rampaging flood waters at the height of Tropical Storm "Ondoy." Magallanes was named one of Time magazine's top 10 heroes of 2009.

The prelate also cited Elvira Fedelicia for his spirit of voluntarism. Fedelicia, honored as ONE Hero of the Year, started a "pushcart classroom" to bring education to poor children in an effort to stop recruitment by gangs.

He acknowledged the efforts of Filipinos living in Mount Pinatubo, Lagdameo also named Parents as among the heroes people should draw inspiration from.

"There are hundreds of ordinary citizens, sculpture heroes who make up for 'infamous' leaders who bring darkness and poverty to our country," said Lagdameo, a vocal critic of the Arroyo administration.

Quoting from Il Salvador Archbishop Oscar Romero, Lagdameo said: "Our brothers and sisters, not bankers, ministers, not members, we are prophets of a future not our own."

A book for 'Ondoy' kids

ACCLAIMED REPORTER AND A columnist of the Philippine Daily Inquirer have teamed up and produced an illustrated story book for children who survived the recent typhoons and floods that drove, timid parts of the country and left many traumatized, homeless or dead.

"Bituin and the Big Flood" (Si Bituin at ang Malaking Baha) was written by business columnist and reporter Ms. Grace P. Reyes and illustrated by features columnist Ana Abiera.

The book is "dedicated to the children who lost their lives during the typhoons 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng,' and to the children who survived." The story has both English and Filipino texts running side by side. It contains guide questions for storytellers and for classroom use.

The story revolves around Bituin, a young girl whose family experiences for the first time a big flood brought about by nature's wrath.

"This little story hopes to help the children who experienced the recent natural disasters and tragedies that caused homeless and traumatized," Reyes said. She sought and through colorful illustrations, the story is about family and community, about helping one another and doing something good during and after the difficult times.

"This is not a story or tragic story but a hopeful one," Reyes stressed. "This is our Christmas gift to the children and to the Philippines." The book would be a great gift especially for schools that were damaged by the typhoons and floods and for the school children who experienced the disasters, Reyes said.

Reyes said the committee wrote a "healing story" for kids after she visited a disaster area and learned from news reports and first-hand accounts about the trauma that the children suffered.

"A little girl in her early teens committed suicide after the typhoon [Ondoy] struck Metro Manila because she was ashamed that she was unable to help her family," Reyes said. "Some children have become afraid of the rain and bodies of water. Many lost members of their family as well as friends and neighbors, their homes and livelihoods are as well as schools, were destroyed. The pain is great."

Reyes asked Abiera, her friend and colleague at the Inquirer, if he would like to do the illustrations. After reading the story Abiera said yes and hurled down to work right away. Both media-awarded media practitioners, Reyes and Abiera have been with the Inquirer for more than 20 years.

Reyes, who has a background in psychology, added that she also sought the advice of child psychologist Dr. Ma. Asuncion Castalbuey who, together with her team, had helped survivors of past disasters.

Published by Anvil Publishing, "Bituin and the Big Flood" (24 pages) is now available at Philippine bookstores. The book costs P70. For orders, call 6270144, 6379626, or contact marketing@anvilpublishing.com.

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Boracay resort draws protests

By Jerome Aning and Nikko Dizon

TOURISM SECRETARY JOSEFINA Ace Durano has opposed an agreement approved by recently resigned Environment Secretary Lito Atienza that allows a private resort to be built on a controversial area in the world-famous Boracay Island in Aklan.

In putting itself athwart the recently signed Boracay Land Use Agreement by Tourism Properties Ltd. (Php T) between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Boracay Island West Cove Resort in Boracay, the Department of Tourism sided with local residents that protest Boracay, who said the site cut up dangerous cliffs.

Php T granted a renewable 25-year lease to the Boracay West Cove Resort to a site located at Sitio Diniwid in Barangay Balabag, one of the three barangays (villages) on Boracay Island.

"The Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) for Boracay Island, adopted by the municipal government, indicates that the island is prone to geologic hazard where any development should be preceded by a thorough geotechnical study of the project site," Durano said in a statement.

Façade to resort?

The deal has raised eyebrows from the opposition because the owner of the resort, businessman Celestino Aquino, is known to be a close friend of Atienza and hailing from Manny Pacquiao Speculation has placed Pacquiao as the real owner of the place.

Durano contended that the planned resort included seven

BORACAY Island West Cove Resort under construction

three-story inns, hotel rooms, as opposed to the CLUP.

"The construction of the said resort facility along the line of cliffs in Sitio Diniwid has obviously not taken into consideration the Buffer Zone imposed by geohazard consideration of the area. The resort was built very close to the cliff and on top of fifteen boulders of cliffs, which compose an unstable structure," he said.

Atienza for his part said yesterday that Durano should not meddle in matters "when ought he comment."

'Stick to tourism'

"He should just stick to tourism issues and I'll stick to environmental concerns," Atienza told the reporters by phone.

Atienza added that he did not want to get into a fight with anyone since as in this matter there he had already completed an environment clear to tourism. Lodi on his bid to evaluate the top resort in Manila in 2010 (Star valid at story bottom)

Durano's statement quoted architect Hans Lee Sinaco, CLUP land-use specialist, as agreeing with Durano's observation. Sinaco said, "We have determined Sitio Diniwid to be an area not to construct" when sought for comment.

Cliffside structure

The Boracay West Cove has reportedly built permanent structures along the cliffs lining the shores of the island, prompting several groups to file complaints.

The Boracay Foundation Inc., led by Lourdes Cusi, said that the Php T was only a tenant who first allowed permission of the land, but did not exempt the landowners from following municipal ordinances regarding building and construction of facilities on unstable zones.

Officials of the town of Malay, which covers Boracay, also objected to the signing of Php T, prompting Aklan Rep. Florencio T. Miraflores to ask the House of Representatives committee on natural resources and ecology to launch an investigation.

NPC won't back presidential bet, is all out for Loren

By Leila B. Salaverria

NO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIdate will enjoy the support of the country's second-largest party, the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), in next year's elections, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco said yesterday.

Cojuangco, son of the party's founder Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, said the coalition was happy being independent and not losing had drawn to any one. The NPC has also decided not to team up with one of the presidential aspirants so that it could work with whoever would win the elections.

"Officially our stand is we're not carrying a presidential candidate," Cojuangco said in a phone interview.

"It does not serve our purpose. We have our underpinnings, we have our own identity. It will not be served by coalescing with anybody. We stand for our own platform...We will collect just work with whoever wins," he added.

The Cojuangco-led party will endorse nothing the presidential candidates Sen. Loren Legarda, a fellow Nacionalista Party member, Senator Sen. Manuel Villar. The NPC had allowed Legarda to team up with whomever she likes following the decision of Sen. Francis Escudero to bolt the party and withdraw from the presidential derby.

But how decision does not bind the party to support Villar.

The NPC has two senatorial candidates—former Sen. Ernesto Herrer, who is well, within the Magic 12 in recent surveys, and deposed dictator Rep. Rodolfo Te Plaza.

LEGARDA

Force to reckon with

At present, the NPC has over 3,000 elective and appointed officials, a base that could be a great asset to an aspiring president. They include one senator, 28 representatives, eight governors, nine vice-governors, 60 board members, 40 city mayors, 17 city vice mayors, 502 city councilors, 1,648 municipal mayors, 471 municipal vice mayors and 2,227 municipal councilors.

Cojuangco said the NPC would cooperate with the next president as long as their stance on issues like the NPC has enough in common with the candidate for president that they would be able to exchange to ed. Education also the elections.

He said the NPC does not want to make enemies even by implying that it would not support the next president. That there were some people who had made informal overtures to the party for a possible team-up, but the NPC is not receptive to the idea he said.

He also noted that the NPC did not endorse anyone for the vice presidency, but its plan got was held by Escudero's departure.

Atienza quits DENR to push Manila comeback

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Jesse "Lito" Atienza is reconsidering reassigned his resignation from the Cabinet, saying he wanted to focus on his bid to reclaim the mayoralty post in Manila.

He also challenged other government officials running for elective posts, including scientist, to quit out of "defendable" to maintain to the people's opinion.

Atienza said he was reconsidering his post despite a recent Supreme Court ruling saying government officials running election posts did not need to resign.

"I believe that I should resign because I just have a new objective. This is to be free on the department, to the President and to the government," Atienza said in a press conference yesterday morning.

Atienza, who served as environment secretary for two years and five months, said he told President Macapagal-Arroyo about his plan to resign some two weeks ago.

He submitted his resignation yesterday.

He said Mrs Arroyo was "very supportive" of his decision.

Atienza, incumbent Mayor Alfredo Lim and former Philippine National Police chief Gen. Avelino Razon are running for mayor of Manila in next year's election.

Atienza served as Manila City mayor for three consecutive terms, from 1998 to 2007. He had his son, Ali run for mayor in May 2007. Ali lost to Lim.

Atienza said that should he get the mayoralty seat, he would reconstruct the structures along the Roxas Boulevard bayside that Lim had torn down, because of Lim's action, he added, the city looked "dark, lonely and dirty" this Christmas season.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 29, 2009
16th Day in the Octave of Christmas
Thomas Becket

1st Reading: 1 Jn 2:3-11
Gospel: Lk 2:22-35
Psalm: 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6

When the day came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God. And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

Then there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, a righteous and devout man who looked forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. So he was moved by the Spirit when the parents brought the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law.

He took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying,

"Now, O Lord, you can dismiss
your servant in peace,
for you have fulfilled your word
and my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you display for all the people to see,
a light to the Gentiles and the glory of your nation
and the glory of your people Israel."

His father and mother remained in awe over what was said about the child. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "See here: he will be for the rise or fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many may be brought to light."

Commentary

After words of anticipation, the Old testas culmination, basically, this is no other than Jesus himself, the Messiah. But, it's possible that the moment of recognition study may be the best teaching moment of the whole season. God gives us gifts to others. They are experiences of his presence in our midst, but gifts and celebrations themselves are not designed to satisfy. They're designed to point us to the giver. Gifts are like sentiments, we aren't meant to dwell indefinitely on them.

If we depend on anything in the world to satisfy our soul's deepest desires, it will eventually leave us with that gnawing loneliness and pain. We will ask if that is all there is, because we know deep down there's not all there is. We are designed for intimacy with people, but their things is a means. Meanwhile give them space. With a kind of happiness the other day Christ does; thanking the parents that we received or reading someone new happy with something that was given to them? Receiving is a blessing, but America's right—listing is a greater blessing. Especially now, how little world, in generous and from true understanding of love, truth and every day!

Reflection Questions: 1. Who is Simeon? 2. What is Mary's response? 3. What is Joseph's response? 4. Can you see Jesus in the face of the poor? 5. How can you be a sign of contradiction in your family? 6. Do you have a sword piercing your own soul?

Source: Catholic Online. Copyright © 2000-2009 Catholic Online. All rights reserved. Catholic Online, 200 Fifth Ave. S., Suite 100, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701. Phone: (727) 821-5740. Fax: (727) 821-5744. E-mail: info@catholic.org Website: http://www.catholic.org/

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Gibo's fish hunt draws laughter

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—MAYOR ARISTHOTELES presidential bet Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro went to marketer—on Sunday for inspiring to suppose his victory rating and find the common fish with the constituents some.

"Do you have 'tamsoi' fish?" he asked vendors in the Lucena public market, causing others to ask each other laughter.

When told that the fish was not available that day, the former defense secretary said he'd just settled for "tamsoi-o-o," a local species shaped like a banana palm.

"I once named it in Manila but it was not here. I know it's fresh here in Quezon," he said.

Despite his failure to find the fish, Teodoro seemed pleased to be greeted warmly by supporters among the vendors and market-goers, shaking their smelly hands and greeting them "Merry Christmas."

The visit completely surprised Gibo Teodoro's endorsement is no different in person. He looks as presidential but he can easily relate to us," said Aldy Lapuyan, president of the Lucena Market Vendors Association.

She added Teodoro of the vote market building could be expanded into a three-story one if he becomes the next president.

"If the building I wanted for vendors is not, we will make it 3 premises just that," he told Lapuyan.

Teodoro said his wife were accompanied by Quezon Rep. Rafido Nantes, his son, Assistant Development Secretary David Nantes, Lucena Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. and his wife Betty.

Administration-run presidential candidate Jojo Mesquita also came with the Teodoros to the market to note that the popular actor and TV host boarded the city market's dry goods section.

He was seen purchasing high-fives and generally posing for pictures with admirers.

After the market visit, Teodoro and Mesquita met with local officials from the Lakas-Kampi-CMD at the Bing Café restaurant to discuss campaign strategies.

Former President Joseph Estrada—also granted the event and formally endorsed Teodoro's presidential bid.

Estrada told only Teodoro and Estrada were capable of leading the country as president.

"If Erap Estrada is not my party mate, I will be with Gibo," the veteran politician said.

Lakas likes his chances

ADMINISTRATION PARTY LAKAS-Kampi-CMD remains confident that its standard bearer, former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, will make a surge on the 2010 presidential campaign trail.

"It's our bold's full game of the point," said Teodoro Rep. Milagros Magsaysay in a text message yesterday. "The make or break stage is two months before the elections when local officials start campaigning and they are urged to see the party line."

Teodoro's spokesperson was assigned to this Mission Defensor Santiago's pronouncement that the 2010 elections would be a three-horse race among Senator Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Manny Villar, and not two as earlier thought. Estrada. Some made the strongest showing in the recent surveys.

But Lakas-Kampi deputy secretary general Reginald Velasco remained optimistic about Teodoro's chances, saying that Teodoro's better was border up those minds based on the party's own surveys.

"How can any senate politician possibly exclude an administration candidate that is endorsed by more than half of the incumbent governors, congressmen and mayors who will provide the needed push in each and every town to deliver the votes?" Velasco remarked.

For his part, Teodoro said he considered survey results as a "guide and challenge for [him] to work more." GIO Gilbert Mallari Jr. Inquirer Southern Luzon

No Mayon lull, says Phivolcs

From page A1

weather advisories (PAG-ASA).

In Manila, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) appealed to lawmakers who have refused to leave their homes on the foothills of Mayon not to be stubborn and to remember that no one anywhere else have the right to be safe from harm.

The appeal followed complaints that foreign tourists and journalists had become a problem themselves for arousing warnings not to enter areas within 8 kilometers from the volcanic crater.

Nearly 50,000 villagers have been evacuated from the danger zone.

No lull

Resident volcanologist Eduardo Laguerta of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) denied there had been a lull in Mayon's eruptions.

"The reported lull really did not happen," Laguerta said. "Even if the number of [volcanic] activities was lower during the weekend, it does not mean that the danger is gone. In fact, the explosions have become stronger compared to previous ones."

"The lava flow is very active and the volume of volcanic deposits is estimated to have reached 24.1 million cubic meters as of Monday morning," he added.

Laguerta said the cries of mother rocks tumbling down the volcano had reached 5.7 kilometers (here from the crater and had begun to ravage tupelo trees at many gullies facing Daraga town, Legazpi City and Sto. Domingo town.

Seize all firecrackers

As an extra precaution, Salvado ordered the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) to ignore all evacuation centers and confiscate "all types of firecrackers and pyrotechnics" being sold inside and within the premises of evacuation centers."

"The BFP is also long overdue and temporary elevated connections to determine possible lose overloading."

Armed with brooms and dustpans, all soldiers also lumped in evacuation centers to launch a cleanup drive....dubbed 'Operation Linis'"—and food evacuees how to maintain cleanliness in their temporary homes.

Ash explosions

During the past 24 hours Mayon belched out seven ash explosions which rose to a maximum height of about 2 kilometers above the summit.

Visible ash explosions occurred at intervals of 30 minutes yesterday morning which rose again to encourage most, said Laguerta.

The seismic network detected 44 volcanic earthquakes, while the sulfur dioxide emission rate increased to 4,229 tons from the previous 2,304 tons.

More troops

The military has deployed extra troops at checkpoints blocking access to Mayon after two tourists and their local guides were seen riding all-terrain vehicles near its foothills on Sunday.

"They must have passed through other areas, and the roads where the checkpoints are, to get inside," said Lapu. Executive Secretary Jesus Dureza of a military task force securing the danger zone. "They wanted to see the lava volcano."

Bautista expressed frustration at having to waste time dealing with the two foreign tourists on hunting saying the military had to chase them out of the zone although the pair was not caught.

Bautista said the military would bring foreign tourists and media people violating the "no-entry" policy to the Office of the Governor for reprimand.

CHR appeal

In an advisory signed by CHR Chair Leila de Lima, the agency urged those still within the danger zones to take into consideration the welfare of rescue workers.

"Refusal to evacuate means the risk that they will need to be rescued when the volcanic eruptions become more or when the earthquakes do more damage to their homes," it said.

"Rescue workers are also people with human rights. We have seen many heroes lose their lives to others in the aftermath of Chopstick Hermit 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng.' By putting ourselves in the path of danger, you are also putting those who will rescue you in the path of danger. This is not respectful of their human rights or the rights of their families who love them and depends on them."

Re-insurance

The GSIS backed the emergency measures being implemented by the Albay provincial government for as long as these were done in a humane manner, "respectful of the dignity of the persons, not using disproportionate force, without discrimination, and with conscious effort to attend to the needs of vulnerable sectors such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities."

Evacuation centers should also offer decent living conditions for the evacuees. Provisions for the needs of children, women, and persons with disabilities should also be available at the temporary shelters, the CHR said.

For the CHR, it should be the police and not the military that should serve "disaster tourists" or anyone violating the no-entry restrictions.

"All norms should be done with only proportional force, with full respect for the rights of suspects, within the bounds of law," the advisory said.

The 2,462-meter Mayon, said to be the most active among the country's 22 active volcanoes, has erupted about 50 times since 1616. Its worst eruption lasted Legazpi town and killed 1,200 people in 1814. Its most last in 1993 killed 77 in an ... With reports from Jessa Cadelina-Ibañez, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and AFP

12 bodies sighted inside ferry wreck on sea floor

By Inquirer.Net

Diver Matthew Caldwell, a captain of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, said Catalyst B was 67 meters (221 feet) below the surface, a depth out of reach of rescue divers.

"I counted at least a dozen bodies in there," he said, noting that he saw men, women and two small children inside the boat.

"From different windows, you see different bodies," he said. The Associated Press: "There could very well be more, because I understand there are small cabins inside and more likely there were people sleeping in the cabin and never had the chance to get out."

Without life vests

Caldwell, an American technical diver, said he didn't see any life vests on the bodies.

He surmised that some passengers were not able to wear life jackets and got out of the ferry, which was carrying 73 people, as it sank in the middle of a monsoon after it steamed from the NW Australia.

Caldwell was tasked by the Coast Guard with assessing the condition of the sunken boat.

Hours the predawn collision, Coast Guard personnel interrogated survivors from the wreck to help divers bodies—all on the day of the sinking.

Before Caldwell's dive, the Coast Guard said 24 passengers and crew members of the Catalyst B had remained missing. Forty-six were rescued from the ferry, which was en route to Lubang island in Occidental Mindoro from Manila.

Caldwell said he was guided by a rope with weights tied to a sinker boat and which he anchored to the sunken ship as a guide to the rest divers.

He noted that it took him four minutes to reach the wreckage of the Catalyst B.

Upright position

The vessel, Caldwell said, was in an "positively upright" position, with its bow "severely damaged."

He said he swam around the vessel twice for 20 minutes to check the damage on Sunday afternoon.

Initial investigators showed that Catalyst B and Australia failed to follow nautical rightof-way rules.

The Coast Guard chief, Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo said the bodies that Caldwell saw would not yet be added to the list of fatalities.

Daunting task

The Coast Guard needs to retrieve and verify the identities of the victims first, he said.

Caldwell said it would be a daunting task to recover the bodies inside the wreckage.

The Coast Guard lacks the equipment and training to conduct deep-sea diving. Coast Guard officials said their personnel could only dive up to 150 feet.

Caldwell said it would take two weeks to recover the victims.

Tamayo said there were talks for Malaysian Tamago to recover the ferry.

Sanchez, Mallgaya relieved

The government has suspended the wrench of the owners of the two boats.

Tamayo said Ferry Officer 1 Danilo Sanchez and Ferry Officer 2 Raul Mallgaya were relieved as detachment commander and cleaning officer, respectively, of the Calaguas port.

"This is not to say that they have been found guilty," Tamayo said at a press conference. "Their relief is to avoid accusations that there is a whitewash in the investigation."

Lt. Alger Rimbawa, Coast Guard Calaguas station commander, said he himself was ready to face any investigations.

He said that based on interviews with survivors, the officers landed the vessel were licensed to the same boat, departing allegations by Sen. Richard Gordon that the sinking could be due to improperly licensed vehicles on board.

As of 5 p.m. on Monday, Rimbawa said no bodies were recovered and 45 others were missing. There were 73 survivors.

Names of fatalities

The fatalities were identified as Lesbily Peñaranda, 19; Alex Peñaganan, 40; Hermie Ann Langalde, 22; Advany Monja, 26; Barbara Gabenia, 8 months, and Jennilyn Gerianes, 20.

Since Monday morning, rescue and search operations have been conducted by the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard deployed three vessels, one airplane and two small crafts; the Air Force, one helicopter; Navy, three vessels; and Bento Shipping Lines, three ships.

Rimbawa said the Coast Guard, the Provincial Disaster Response Team and the Public Safety Division-Calapan also sent rubber boats and motorized boats.

"We have not retrieved additional dead bodies as of now," he added.

Crew members

Four crew members of the Bahtyo 9—identified as Rodolfo Bernice, Lord Adrian Lanyo, Marlon Galang and Aniel Fausa, who were initially reported missing—were among the survivors, Rimbawa said.

They brought the total number of surviving crew members to 11, with three others still missing, he said.

The Philippine National Red Cross in Oriental Mindoro named the body of a woman as Potenciana Nacpan in Lalud, of San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan. Her body was claimed by her parents.

Missing truck driver

Odilde Quiroz, a church worker in Barangay Sigo-Cruzin in Calapan, said more than 60 parish members were praying for thirty Thursday, the missing truck driver husband of their village captain.

Henry's truck assistant Rolando Mayor was able to survive.

Due to the suspension of the Bento Shipping Lines' boats, 114 passengers and 121 rolling cargoes and private vehicles were stranded at the Calapan port as of 4 p.m. on Monday, according to 10 cultivate.

Aries Lerioga, a member of the Batangas Coast Guard Operation Center, said 15 trucks were stranded at the Batangas port, but there were no stranded passengers.

Rimbawa said Bento's three vessels, including the Bahtyo 9, could not travel.

Only 18 vessels can travel, data from Mississippi Shipping Lines, has been forwarded, and was from Superstar.

With a report from AP

So who's sitting on pending bills?

By Inquirer.Net

measure, which Congress approved early this month to "facilitate the responsibilities of the master-the Coast Guard and Bureau [Maritime Industry Authority]."

Bunoan said the latest sea tragedy, the sinking of MV Bahtyo 9 on Saturday, could have been prevented if the ship's departure had been properly observed by the law.

Under the proposed Coast Guard Law of 2009, which Bunoan authored, it would be the Coast Guard and not Marina that would have the authority to clear or hold departing ships or ports.

Even so, the Bahtyo is wondering why Congress had yet to pass the proposed Philippine Maritime Act of 2009, which would consolidate jurisdiction over the shipping industry into a National Maritime Industry Authority.

"For a bill to be in chamber for two years is a long time," Gary Oliver, Mr. Arroyo's deputy spokesperson, said in a media briefing.

"It is really something that deserves to be endorsed as urgent, congressman should have seen this long ago and passed the bill," he added.

Marina Administrator Elena Bautista called on senators to "fast track" the passage of the measure.

Senate slow

Bautista said the Senate counterpart bill was pending with the committee of Sen. Francis Escudero, which supposedly conducted only one hearing on the measure.

"The house bonus is ready for plenary (session) already. Senate is a bit slow," she said in the text message sent to Rachel Ship, Melody Pantoviella, chair of the House committee on transportation, who forwarded it to the Inquirer.

Oliver said the Palace was in favor of deregulating the shipping industry, arguing that the measure would protect local boat builders' interests.

He made it clear that industry players had the "primary responsibility over the safety and quality of their services."

"The initiative of the industry would have to come from the operators—that they should be in terms of rationalizing their passenger structure," he said.

Bunoan said the sinking of Bahtyo 9 off Calaguas City was no different from that which befell two other ships—the MV Princess of the Stars, which went down in typhoon Frank in 2008, and Superferry 9, which sank off Zamboanga City in September.

Vehicles on cargo hold

In the three sea disasters, the cause of the ship's listing and eventual capsizing had to do with the improper "lashing" of motor vehicles on the cargo hold, Bunoan said.

The other day Sen. Richard Gordon said the sinking of Bahtyo 9, which claimed six lives and left 33 others missing, could be due to improperly licensed motor vehicles.

"The trip was supposed to be only for two hours, but we have and a half time the trip, the motor vehicles ... would get tired recently," Gordon had told radio-dzBB on Sunday.

Gordon, who went to the Batangas City port to assist survivors in his capacity as chair of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), quoted the first mate of the ship as telling him that the sunted left Calaguas port for an hour although the crew had not yet finished "lashing" the vehicles to the cargo hold.

The 189-ton Bahtyo 9, which had a full passenger capacity of 284, carried nine motor vehicles at the time of the sinking. These included a 10-wheel truck, a six-wheel truck, four cargo jeeps and a car.

Yesterday, Bunoan said improperly tied motor vehicles also had something to do with the sinking of the Princess of the Stars and Superferry 9.

Blue ribbon hearing

Bunoan said he had vented this question during a senate blue ribbon committee hearing on maritime accidents in the country in November.

But he said that under the newly approved but yet-to-be-signed Coast Guard Law, the Coast Guard would be given the power to board departing ships, conduct the necessary inspections and then clear or hold them for departure.

Before a ship leaves port, authorities must find out if there is overloading, if life vaws and lifeboats are enough, and if motor vehicles are properly lashed to the cargo hold, according to Bunoan.

Grey area

At present, he said, the responsibility of making those inspections was a "grey area between the Coast Guard and Marina."

Marina actually performs these tasks, but the agency "did not have sufficient units and people," he said.

The question then is: he asked to the Bahtyo 9 sinking was who cleared its departure from Calaguas, he said.

This could be among the questions he would pose if the blue ribbon committee pushed through with its inquiry today, he said.

Bunoan expressed hope that Mr. Arroyo would sign the proposed Coast Guard Law, which, he added, the House had yet to transmit to Malacañang. The law was approved by the Senate and the House early this month.

Travel woes: Long delays, tight security

By Inquirer.Net

said to lift their shoelaces for the a quick pat after their full body-scan clearance.

Restrictions even lifted that long black hair of Michelle's daughter to make sure she was hiding nothing.

Mortifier said he was disappointed by the delays, but understood the need for extra security.

"It was a minor inconvenience," he told Agence France-Presse. "Would I have liked to be on the plane on Mass? We, Mostly, it just would have been better organized."

The new measures follow the botched Christmas Day attack by terror suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, accused of trying to detonate explosives aboard a Northwest Airlines flight with 290 people on board as the Airlines pre-man are in land in Detroit. (For related story in *The World*, Page A18)

Lines to get through security checkpoints at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport—one of the busiest in the world—moved smoothly on Sunday, with the screening process appearing to be tighter.

"Everything worked like a charm today," said Don Rosenberg, a TSA supervisor in Terminal 1.

More work needed

"Everything was smooth. The passengers were happy. It was good planning by the TSA—we had enough people and it worked."

Passenger Kamesh Nair, 29, said more work needed to be done to ramp up screening following the failed terrorist attack.

"How did he get it on the plane?" Nair asked. "It's a failure of government."

Nair, an engineer living in South Carolina who was on his way to India see his family for the first time in two years, said he would not be deterred by the threat of terrorist attacks.

"Even though we're nervous, we can't stop. We have no other choice. We have to travel," he said. "Being from India, we know the problem. We have to fight against terrorism and we have to support security."

Passenger Amy Timm, 35, also said she refused to let threats of terrorism affect her daily life.

"There's nothing we can do about it," she said as she waited to board a KLM flight to Tanzania.

Timm arrived early for the flight, and said she was surprised by how quiet things were at the airport.

"I'm kind of shocked. We were expecting heightened security and stuff," she said.

Layered approach

According to a TSA statement, the agency has a "layered approach" to security that "allows us to surge resources as needed."

"We have the ability to quickly implement additional screening measures, including explosive detection canine teams, law enforcement officers, gate screening, behavior detection and officer clearance both now and in the future," the TSA said. "Passengers should not expect to see the same thing at every airport."

The TSA on Sunday issued an update on its website that said passengers would be subject to greater security, but its information was not so detailed as the announcements sent by the agency to airlines this weekend.

The airlines said the new TSA measures required an additional hour of security before boarding body pat-downs at airport gates overseas.

International travelers were also told that they could not leave their seats for the last hour of a flight, during which time they also could not use any of their electronics.

Passengers were also limited to one piece of carry-on bag, luggage, including a purse or briefcase, and that piece had to be stowed in an overhead compartment for the last hour of a flight.

Airlines were ordered to run off all flights nonessential toys, some with maps showing a plane's location, and plans and flight crews were told not to make comments about clocks or landmarks below the flight path.

There also were unspecified measures at airports in the United States, where lines at screening machines grew long. At the Detroit airport, officers in bright blue vests marked "Police" walked through the check-in lobby.

'Very, very safe'

Despite the stiff layers of extra security, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said in an interview Sunday talk shows that the traveling public "is very, very safe."

NEW TRAVEL RULES Passengers wait in line at the check-in counters at Toronto's international airport. New regulations imposed after an apparent terror attempt on Christmas Day have led to delays and considerations of flights.

"This was one individual literally of thousands that fly and thousands of flights every year," Napolitano said. "And he (Abdulmutallab) was stopped before any damage could be done. I think the important thing to recognize here is that once this incident occurred, everything happened that should have."

Even so, the US Congress is preparing to hold hearings on what happened and whether rules would be changed.

"It's amazing to me that we individuals like this who are sending out so many signals could end up getting on a plane going to the US," said Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader in the Senate.

On Saturday, two Middle Eastern men were thought to have been acting suspicious aboard a flight from Detroit. They were detained and questioned by federal counterterrorism authorities before being released.

That incident—and Sunday's incident in Detroit—led Rio Council on American-Islamic Relations to urge airline security personnel to avoid ethnic and religious profiling.

2nd frightening incident

Detroit's airport was rattled on Sunday by a second frightening incident in three days. Pilots declared an emergency after another Nigerian reported an unusually long time in an airplane restroom, said a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson, Sara Kuban.

In a similar scene to the one Friday, the plane was taken to a remote corner of the airport, far from the terminals, where it was surrounded by emergency vehicles. All of the baggage were removed from the plane, lined up on the tarmac and searched by explosive-sniffing dogs.

The passenger, whose name was not made public, "was removed from the aircraft and questioned" by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Indications at this time are that the individual's behavior is due to legitimate illness," Kuban said, "and no other suspicious behaviors or materials have been found."

The passenger was subsequently released. Reports from *AFP, AP* and *New York Times* Alexis Romero

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Mayoral bet's convoy attacked; 1 dead

Cops want law to regulate use of noisemakers

By Jhonnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AMID CALLS TO BAN THE USE of firecrackers, especially during the upcoming New Year, to prevent casualties, Cebuanos, mostly the children, have come up with an alternative way of welcoming New Year.

Young Cebuanos now use an improvised noisemaker dubbed locally famous as "lantaka" made from empty mineral water bottles, stainless cans or PVC pipes, a lighter to trigger the explosion and paint or lacquer thinner, which is used as an explosive.

City Police chief Senior Supt. Pantaleon Comendador said the lantaka, which has become a menace to Cebu City and the rest of Cebu province, has caused a problem for the police here.

Comendador revealed that a woman collapsed in Barangay Mabolo, Cebu City, last week after a lantaka aimed at her exploded, prompting the police chief to order the confiscation of the improvised device.

A boy, too, lost his fingers, Cebu City, said the lantaka is a safer and cheaper alternative to firecrackers since a bottle of thinner costs only P20 and would last the entire night.

He also expressed dismay over Comendador's order for the city police to confiscate the lantaka since this did not harm anybody.

Comendador said they seized the devices because of potential complaints from people who claimed being harmed by them.

Besides, he noted that the lantaka could inflict harm if an improvised bullet is placed at the front of the improvised tube.

Comendador maintained that holders of the lantaka could face charges if there were complaints against them.

He said he would ask the city council to pass an ordinance regulating the use of lantaka.

Comendador also ordered his men to confiscate all firecrackers sold downtown since the sale of pyrotechnics was allowed only at the South Road Properties.

The police wanted to ensure the safety of the public after an explosion at about 30 malls in Metrobase City on Christmas Eve caused a fire that killed three persons.

CARABAO EVACUATION
Even animals are evacuated near the danger zone at Barangay Maricaban, Guinsaugon, Albuy, as lava cascades down the slopes of Mayon volcano during its continued wild eruption. —GRACE LA PEÑA

LAOAG CITY—THE FOUR-VEHICLE CONVOY OF a mayoral candidate had just left a Christmas party in a village in Dingras town at around 1 a.m. on Monday when armed men fired at them, killing a village chief and wounding four others, police said.

Killed was Barangay Lunac-dian Juan Casiano, 35, who was running for municipal councilor.

Wounded were motorcycle-riding Board Member Robert Castro, Councilor Rodney Albano, and security escorts SPO2 Cesar Salindo and PO1 Joel Bautista. They were taken to the Ilocos Hospital and declared out of danger.

Supt. Benjamin Lusad, provincial police director, said the group, led by mayoral candidate Rodney Ingalid, a barangay chairman heading home after attending the festivities in Barangay Ingud, ambushed.

Ingalid, who is running under the Nacionalista Party (NP) against incumbent Mayor Maryanne Gandeza, was not hurt. Gandeza is running under the Lakas-Kampi-CMD. Ingalid and Gandeza were rivals in the 2007 mayoral race.

Gandeza condemned the attack on radio, saying it was prepared to be given political colors because the victims are known to be her rivals.

Unless residents involving local leaders in Dingras had occurred in the past and residents were blaming heated political rivalry for them.

Last march, Gandeza's chief security escort was gunned down by unidentified men and opposing troops were quick to point at each other as responsible for the killing.

Officials have been calling on the Commission on Elections to consider declaring Dingras an election hot spot because of the series of shooting cases.

"The group was attacked along a farm road more than 2 kilometers away from where they came from," Lusad said.

He said empty shells mostly from an M-16 rifle were recovered from the scene. Police reports later said around 70 empty shells of various calibers had been recovered.

Ingalid's security escorts fired back at their attackers, police said.

The convoy was composed of Dingras officials allied with the NP, Cristino Arnados, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Prices of Bonoan bangus soar

DAGUPAN CITY—THERE'S NOW A HIGH demand here for locally grown "bangus" (milkfish) and its price has reached as high as P113 a kilo.

But agriculture officials and bangus growers remained confident of more than enough" supply of bangus until New Year's Day, when demand usually peaks. They also said prices would stabilize after the holidays.

"It's normal that during the holiday season, are really four. And when we four, we have visitors from abroad and other places in the Philippines and when you're in Dagupan, the Bonoa here is bangus," said city agriculturist Emma Molina.

Dagupan marked its Bonoa in honor of St. John the Evangelist on Dec. 26. But the celebration began on Dec. 16, coinciding with the start of the traditional Simbang Gabi.

"Up to the New Year, the demand is high. So, if the demand is high and the supply is the same, prices will go up. And I am confident that the price increase will only happen five hours before the demand, which was last Christmas eve and on New Year's eve again," Molina said.

On Monday, the average price of bangus in the public market here was P130 a kilo, almost P10 higher than its price before the holiday season.

Councilor Lito Fernandez, one of the biggest bangus growers, noted a current shortage of bangus weighing 300 grams and up.

"This is because there are usually the ones ideal for 'relyenong bangus.' These are also usually debearded and sent as gifts," he said. He's growing bangus (milkfish) in a concrete fishpen.

Fernandez said that with the bangus price breaching P100, growers and operators who lost their stocks during the floods in October have begun to recover.

At least 40 percent of the fish ponds and bangus farms and in neighboring San Fabian and Mangaldan towns were swept away by rampaging floodwaters in October.

"In Dagupan alone, the total damage in stocks and structures reached P973 million," Molina said.

"All operations in the city have resumed their operations. But they have not yet recovered in terms of the volume that they are able to bring to market. They will be able to sell earliest in March next year. We will be fully recovered by about the first quarter of next year," Molina said. Gabriel Cordivera, Inquirer Northern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

TACLOBAN CITY

Troops recover landmine

SOMEWHERE troops clashed with suspected New People's Army rebels in Marop town, Davao Oriental, on Monday morning, days after the communist insurgents commemorated their 41st anniversary.

Reports said that from the government side, but troops recovered an unexploded landmine as well as parts of three detonated explosives at the encounter site, according to Lt. Col. Jerry Dequeros, 67th Infantry Battalion commander.

Dequeros said soldiers from the 67th IB were conducting combat patrol at the boundary of Mati and Tarragona villages when they chanced upon an undetermined number of rebels at 8:45 a.m., setting off a 30-minute gun battle.

Soldiers also recovered at the area several rounds of ammunition from an M-14 machine gun as well as personal belongings of the rebels. —Reuters C. Jr. Inquirer Mindanao

LAOAG CITY

1 dead from pork stew

A WOMAN died and 12 other persons were hospitalized in a suspected case of food poisoning in Santa Barbara town in Ilocos on Sunday.

Town and health officials were still determining the cause of the suspected poisoning in Barangay Bulbuagan Oeste.

Santa Barbara police Junalyn Pintano said Elizabeth Borrello died while being treated at the Western Pangasinan Sanitarium. Twelve other victims were taken to different hospitals.

Santa Barbara Mayor Isabelo Maquera said the victims became ill after eating pork stew at a wake. —Reuters P. Reyes Jr., Inquirer Visayas

LAGUNA

2 thieves held

POLICE arrested two suspected robbers after robbing a house in Calamba City on Christmas eve.

Hubert Earle Abaro and Rolan Aquino, both 23, were arrested hours past midnight on Dec. 25.

Calamba police chief Supt. Nestor dela Cruz said the two and another companion broke into the house of Wesley delos Santos, 35, in Barangay 5.

Delos Santos said the arrested suspects took with them a computer, a PlayStation set and a motorcycle, which they also used as getaway vehicle.

Police arrested Abaro and Aquino in a nearby village at around 5 a.m. and recovered the stolen items. —Marlon Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Alleged drug dealer survives ambush

ROXAS CITY—AN ALLEGED DRUG DEALER in Cuyo survived an ambush staged by unidentified persons Monday morning, about 100 meters away from the city police station and his residence on Burgos Street here.

The police said Rolando Aquino, 50, was riding his motorcycle and traveling when two suspects who were riding a motorcycle and had handkerchiefs covering their faces, fired shots at the vehicle at about 9:30 a.m.

Aquino fled back using his 45-cal. pistol but he was also hit in the left leg. The victim was brought to the hospital for treatment.

According to the police, Aquino's motorcycle had several bullet holes.

The police were looking at the angle of illegal drug trade as the motive behind the incident, he said.

SPO1 Charlemaine Tapas, officer-on-case, said the police had ranked the house of Aquino, a native of Barangay Amaga, Bigus, Cuyo, for his alleged involvement in the drug trade. —Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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OPINION

Shattered dreams

EDITORIAL

POLITICS IS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE IN SPORTS. Sports officials themselves are the first to say this: politics and sports do not mix. They say factionalism deals a serious blow to athletes' morale and disgusting exchanges aired in the media by quarreling officials affect the performance of athletes. But in a field that is obsessed with measurements—time, length, height, score—how does one define morale?

The evil of politics in Philippine sports now has a human face—a teary-stained one, in fact. The ill effects of political intrarivalries in sports can now be measured: one gold medal and P980,000 cash, at the very least. These were what Marlowe Bibit, the regional queen of road racing, lost when she was told to withdraw from the cycling competitions in the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Vientiane, Laos, earlier this month.

Sports officials resting in their cushy air-conditioned offices or plush lawsuit may find it difficult to comprehend the pain in Bibit's voice when she told a television reporter in Filipino: "This was for my family. This was for my country." It may be difficult for them to relate to her anguish when she protested, "I am not selfish!"

What's P300,000 to them other than off? Or one gold medal? We couldn't have improved on our fifth-place finish in the SEA Games with one more gold. But to an athlete who has trained hard and given the sport her all, this is everything.

As Bibit told it, she tried her best to tell the Philippine Olympic Committee what competing meant to her. She reminded them of the many hours she had spent training for the Games, the sacrifices she had made, and her very good chances of winning the gold medal for the country. All to no avail. Instead she was told that if she were to compete, it would mean she was being selfish and she would be doing a Judas.

Bibit was asked by the POC to withdraw from the cycling competitions (where she could have participated—and perhaps won medals—in three events) after the International Cycling Federation (known by its French acronym UCI) refused to give 12 other Filipino riders their licenses to compete in the Games. These riders belong to a cycling faction recognized by the POC. Bibit, who belongs to the national federation recognized by the UCI, got her license, making her eligible to compete in the SEA Games. But because of the squabble between competing local cycling organizations she lost her chance to bring glory to her country and bring home a tidy sum to her family during the holidays, too.

Politics did not stop there. Intensifying after his reinstatement as gold medal harvest from eight to Thailand in 2007 to only four in Laos, the country's aquatics chief, Mark Joseph, sent out text messages blaming alleged lapses and judging in the Games as well as the lack of support from the Philippine Sports Commission, the government agency that helps fund the training of athletes. Athletes, which surpassed an earlier target but fell short of its adjusted goal, also decried the lack of government support.

Of course, Joseph and Go Teng Kok, the athletics punishdear, are aligned with the POC which has engaged the PSC in a seemingly endless war. The political road-effing leg between the two sports groups has been getting dirtier and dirtier over the years. And it is going to turn even worse after the less than spectacular performance of our athletes in the latest editions of the SEA Games.

Politics is ruining up the core of our country's sports program. And while our sports officials keep fighting over turf and other things, many of our athletes, like Bibit, will continue to see their efforts go to waste and their dreams of sports glory being shattered.

Unseen 'Slaughter of the Innocents'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"Look for the likes of Tess Bangudulem," Andal Jr ordered.

"Father, they are here," Andal Jr reported over cellfone. He'd cut Cecilia Ordoñez's compelling account says Andal Jr. replied. "You know what you must do."

Cyberspace reported Bangudulem's massacre: "Jimmy Cobilla, Midland Reviews reporter, that morning was on his Honda bicycle going for his fish ... when he, Omar Maravilla Jr, Bebot Jr., Bella Wag, Bello Jr's inc, Delia Flame have money. Tess is Bel.ok, Bebe. Flame don't, Bebe."

"Unay itsur Jimmy ... having covered Bangudulmans in the past. It didn't matter. Every Moro unleashed his firearm into Jimmy, leaving him headless."

Laughter over grandma encounters is another. Instead of being slapped, journalists become cheerleaders.

ISC thrived largely to Bedlamites, one of those killed was son of Herod's own sons, as he said, "It's better to be Herod's hog than his son." Roman Emperor Augustus snapped. So alluded to Herod's cruelty amid the custom of refraining to slaughter swine.

The Augustinian barbarity stoked seething fury here and abroad. That rage compelled Rizal to write Jose Ignacio Rodriguez: "Tell Spaniards, to crush down reluctantly on the political measures she had created.

In that watch, the President glimpsed resurging people power. She has tried to emulate the ruling she hated.

Deathward Marcos used the same thing—and failed. Will she succeed?

It depends. Power is already draining from Malacañang, as the end of the President's term approaches. Will the Maguindanao victims get justice? Will the next few months see reforms to overcome the continuing unseen "Slaughter of the Innocents"?

One more fractured human right is what many neighboring countries take for granted. The right of infants to celebrate their first birthdays. In the stunning no republics, 20 out of every 1,000 kids never make it to their first birthdays. In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, infant deaths exact at 81, approximating Namibia.

Mothers could have seen their first birthdays in west dear Malaysia, infant mortality rates are down to 8. Those dry-as-dust statistics mask an obscene scandal: even are preventable deaths.

Compared to cuts from the Municipal Boulevard project or Mega Pacific elevation computer contract, birthdates for newborns in public health programs that shrivel one PT out of every 10 from drugs the poor need, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism found.

Many infants are borne by ill fed mothers in job-short families. "There are more undernourished children and nutritionally-at risk pregnant and lactating mothers than there were six years ago," the 7th National Nutrition Survey found.

Statistical ease for the poor is clear. Skilled medical personnel attend to half of every 100 births here. In Thailand, 99 out of every 100 mothers have such personnel during delivery, the UN Human Development Report states.

For many in the Philippines, that's like real cost of gulab. Unlike Bangsamoro, there's no enemy. What happens their dreams are nearly as dry-eyed bowels or bare cheeks. They're not of eight.

Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents has been replayed here daily for years. Worse, it is taken for granted.

So, save the soothing lyrics of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel's prayer justified: "God of forgiveness," this Holocaust survivor penned at Auschwitz death camp site, "do not forgive the murderers of children..."

Email: jaumbar-sales@ymail.com

Education

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

The latter table is correct to the full statistics that no nurse is ever had nurses in these lan. integer always tells, by suggesting that some tests can be had tests of the 40s, integer sometimes falls, particularly when it attaches to a smaller lot falls movie. Tiger Woods is scared that run the hard way, having just lost an ad that subsidized consultants in "be like Tiger." There is a discussion, as they say, in it.

But it's the part about the public schooling Bacquias as a boxer, or as a sportsman, but not as nurses in our ads, or politicians that makes for a more interesting discussion. It's true of course, but that explanation requires an explanation. The question is, "Why?" Why do 40 spaces do that? Or more importantly, why are Filipino nurse able to do that?

Here we finally gotten wiser and note the difference between sports and nurses: men, money politics, or more broadly between entertainment and political there we finally become more mature in be able to operate on area levels, adjusting Bacquias for awesome fears to hosting but rejecting him for not very awesome ambitions in politics?

It can can certainly be made for it, but with a lot of fine tuning.

The sad truth is that in India a similar phenomenon happened, the sudden and wholesale metamorphosis by Bollywood stars of public office making the political parties exceptionally anxious to recruit them. Then just as suddenly, the voters stopped voting for them, asked in no small way in the end if Bollywood prepared in this terms, "Yeah, my filmmakers" two years ago, remain of a Ring with a sense sinking the movie like the Titanic. "There's a discernment, publicity-wise."

I've always thought the impact of that trial has been greatly unappreciated. That event was a watershed in the development of this country's political culture, its pedagogical value cheap and wide. It was the original reality show, long before "Survivor" and "Big Brother" came along. And it was by far the most popular, drawing as it did millions of viewers on as prime as it got, with people glued to their every afternoon on a weekday for weeks on end. For at least a couple of months in late 2000, offices ground to a halt, everyone watching the great. ear drone, the biggest telenovela, the most real. tele reality show on earth.

The result of it was to drive home the point about living long on "saving president," or to build a chasm between real and real life, boiling ill for the brisk of entertainment in politics. I don't know that that drunks wouldn't eventually have been seen, the way it was in India, but I do know the impact the trial visited this process and gave it an exclamation point with Edsa II.

A senior Palm Asia survey seems to bear this out. Lost in its many proposition that GMA had become so unpopular that her endorsement was seen a kiss of death was the part that said that while entertainers had a tremendous impact on the products they endorsed, they did not have the same impact on the candidates they did. Among the entertainers named were Bacquias and Vic Sotto. There just for candidates was a palm tree of short-pitch for products.

I myself thought that might be true of both in the past, when they were not as huge as they've become today, Bacquias because of his victories and Vic because of his high profile dating his then-partner Pia. But if Bacquias's showing at the movies is anything to go by for those kinds. More and more, the public is able to differentiate, and sooner than others, routine. Being big in boxing and show biz no longer translates into being big in politics. Or we might be seeing the opposite, which is a thing. That is, the others, like some developed nights, having invested heavily in Pacquiao's endorsement.

Why were Filipinos are part of voting?

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Step forward

FOREIGN COMMENT

FEW HAVE EXPECTED THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE in Copenhagen, in throw up a game-changer of a deal. Yet, even lowered expectations could hardly stem the disappointment many people felt over the final outcome—a last-minute accord that was weaker than not only a legally binding treaty but also the so-called "political" agreement.

Efforts, the Copenhagen Accord represents a step forward, although not enough, in the battle against global warming.

The next UN-backed climate summit will take place a year from now in Mexico City, but there is no time to waste. It is imperative that all nations act now to make the Copenhagen Accord's stepping stone to a new climate treaty that will replace the Kyoto Protocol. —The China Daily

Ode to family

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD CELEBRATES the feast of the Holy Family within the octave of Christmas and New Year, and the year it was last Sunday, Dec. 27. That feast is an perfect a time as any to dwell on the Filipino family which is being threatened from all sides, largely because of the separation of spouses and children due to overseas employment. Christmas for me is always noisy and reminiscences as our huge clan gathers to eat, drink and be merry. Every year I invite a priest to celebrate the mass and bless the food. This year the invited celebrant was Fr. Jun Bautista, the formidable Tebowy option in chief Imee Marcos-Manotoc's camp. Fr. Jun, who brought his parents Gus and Howard Bautista, and friends Ben and Joel Canlas, Jr. and Sr. was an elegant evening wedding officiated by Fr. Mario Francisco, S.J. at the home of Raven's sister and brother-in-law, Gino and Noreen Arenas of BDO, which was bedecked with white over-hanging orchids and roses in multiple colors. Newlywed Filipino food entered by Gaita Reyes, violin music by Cole Bellpers, my sister-in-law's nephew, native music from the Amicus Glee Club trio and contemporary pieces from the harpist Heather Ann Arenas and Monic, and lots of toasting from our relatives as well as the couple's friends from places around the world where they had lived and worked.

* * *

The year started out to be very special also for the Duque de Bruneis clan of Pangasinan which last month celebrated the 100th birthday of their matriarch, Perfecto "Poring" de Venecia, at the Manila Polo Club. Poring is the last living former president of the Ateneo de Manila School and current chair of the Philippine-Brunei Business Council. The de Venecia, former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. among those who came to the elegantly outfitted grand dame as "Mommy Poring." What's really remarkable about her is that, as JDV pointed out during the celebration, she is the beloved stepmother who buried the mother and father of the step-mothers are dead and aided, "like those of Dr. Benilda and Jesse White." She was a beauty queen who joined in the Intercontinental Fair Festival, University in Manila, and daughter of the municipal treasurer of Mangaldan, Pangasinan, and granddaughter of the founding mayor of Calasiao, when Judge Juan de Venecia Sr. assisted her. When the judge took the former high school teacher as his new bride in a celebrated wedding in Manila in 1948, he already had seven children by first wife, Casimira, who died of tuberculosis in 1946 for lack of medicines during World War II. I told Oscar de Venecia that she must have had a lot of guts to agree to have seven children, especially, and he quipped that his father's charisma reminded them of Fidel and JDV's confidence.

* * *

Listening to all the stories about her, I was struck by the love his stepchildren and only son Tito had for her. JDV rushed to Manila from abroad to be present at the 8 p.m. Mass and the celebration. Apparently their love was due to the fact that she treated them all as if they were her own children, and she got quite involved in various civic organizations such as the Girl Scouts of the Philippines and the Catholic Women's League. She recalled that JDV was the one who called her mother Pacita since he was only 4 when his mother died. JDV shared for a few years with his father and stepmother in Bayambang, Pangasinan, where the elder De Venecia served as judge of the Court of First Instance until his retirement in 1965. Young JDV who tagged up all the books in the small high school library wasn't content with his Mommy Poring regaled's. Once she noticed that she was pulling all the magazines at the bottom of the basket and the music on top. Joe explained that he was just making sure their contributors would know that he stood up for the Benjamin Cuna of Lingayen for lunch and a nap every day while attending classes in high school.

What Pacita's 100 years will as is that while worth living in full of love, peace and harmony with God and her family.

* * *

Another friend I'd like to toast is that "Ode to family" is Dennis Villegas Dana of Los Baños and Quezon City who celebrated her 80th birthday last July at UP Baguio Alumni. Forty-three years ago, Jessie was only in her mid-30s when she lost her husband, David Dana (a former trusted assistant of Henry Sy-Sr.) to the Mayagupit affair. Dennis was only 6 years old. She and her loyal family to which Manuel executive Gabriel Dana, Nora Dana and Julie Ilay Dana belong) is a phenomenon. Dennis was left with seven children whose ages ranged from 15 to just 2 years. At the time of his father's death, Dennis' youngest son had a small sunshine advertising business in which Jessie had no hand in day was busy raising the children. With no formal business education (she had a degree in Home Economics from UP) but with a strong determination to raise her seven children and first UPHS-trained Catholic faith, she pitched up the business and made it prosper, enough to send the Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines for years. Dennis' mate now her old-dens now properly educated here and abroad and, with the exception of her special child, Monic, who studies and works at Cagayan Spa. Resort in Cebu, are now responsible professionals. Dennis' secret: "Have a strong faith in our Creator and keep moving forward, without looking back."

It's personal

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVERY YEAR, THE DAYS BETWEEN CHRISTMAS and New Year are the most dangerous days of the year, as most of us are between two major holidays, when everyone can rest from the lavish preparations and celebrations on Dec. 24-25 and rest the days before, and gather strength and stamina for the frenzied observation of New Year's Eve. New Year's Day is often observed at home, if not in bed, with most people recovering from a hangover and from the celebration that follows a night of feasting and drunkenness. That is, unless those assigned to the hospital after a midnight with a ruptured liver/ear in mind emphasize.

But in these days of rest and recovery tragedy still intrudes. On top of thousands of fireworks accidents is the fact that, in the spirit of "peace and goodwill to men" when they can go home, about 5 hundred families are still searching for and mourning family members caught in fires starting in Christmas Eve, 24, and the sinking of a ferry off Batangas two days later.

What makes the last two accidents all the more horrific is that, ranged against the roster of marine accidents in the past couple of years, they were relatively few. When we take into consideration the number of lives lost, the collision and sinking would seem very routine, compared to major tragedies where hundreds of victims and survivors have yet to find closure and justice.

Even before these trials, we were also severely tried by calamity events, such as the Mayon volcano massacre a little over a month ago, and the string of natural disasters in the past year that aggravated levels of damage that they left the nation stunned and grasping for explanations.

* * *

It's not over-zealous, but it seems doesn't take a vocation just because we hang our guards and completed the nine-day thanking with cards.

Just before Christmas, an urban poor area straddling the boundary between Pasay and Makati was destroyed by fire, and an estimated hundreds of families were left homeless. Though I was caught already by the news, many me losing your home just before the biggest feast of the year, it quickly got buried beneath daily concerns and the upcoming celebration.

A few days later, I received a text message that established a personal link with the victims. Items out among those removed homeless in the fire were about 200 documents of the members of a neighborhood association served by Likhaan, a health NGO on whose board of trustees I sit. Some of the women likewise sit on the board and in our last meeting, we discussed among other things, planning elections and their planned Christmas party.

And because a few days later, the same women would lose whatever it was that anchored them to safety and survival, with their school age children likewise losing their books and school materials, that is, if they could still return to school after the massive damage done to their community.

Suddenly, what had seemed just a sad piece of news had turned close. It happened to affected people I knew. It had acquired urgency, as well as served up an impetus to act and to help.

* * *

If just serves to me then that perhaps this is what we need to do with every horrid news: link and relate the event distributing news item we read or hear over radio.

In the midst of a bad news avalanche, one runs the risk of becoming so numb as to become deaf to the killings in Maguindanao, they made rush over life organizations that it is impossible to care more or even care at all.

But I find it worse—and the policies, crimes and neglect that caused them—are to be mitigated or reversed, then what all of us need to do it is to take them personally. We need to find the personal detail in the event lurking in every incident, the human interest in the story that will allow us to find a connection, however remote.

Come to think of it, every story in the news, but especially the bad news, is personal. We may not know any of the victims, much less have met them personally, but we are affected. Not only because every death and violent incident diminishes our humanity but also because every bit of negligence, ignorance, carelessness or malicious intent, endangers us as well.

If the boat owners and crew failed to warn their passengers about the risk they were in, and regulators failed to convince them, can we ever board a vessel again with full confidence and trust? If the Manila Hotel, the Philippine Plaza, the Dusit, Mandarin Oriental, etc. able to elude bombs, could we be back to our to our jobs without fearing for our lives? Would we be able to travel down the high ways and not fear for the lives and for family united because of bad driver operators?

* * *

ILY Mayon and "Ondoy," for instance, are purely natural disasters, with no human intervention connected to their arrival or sudden disappearance people and communities.

But in briefings by environmental experts have been, there is indeed a human hand behind the destruction left by Ondoy, Pepeng and other weather disturbances. True enough, there was nothing authorities could do about the volume of rain water that came pouring down from the skies that day but months and years before them, many illegal settlements, diversion channels, dredging canals and other waterways, widening paths for floodwater to pass through compromised.

Mayon Volcano may long been an active volcano, and talked hundreds in its many previous eruptions, but the number of casualties is caused as much by official negligence and unpreparedness as by Mayon's fury. And the "brave calamity" workers have indeed risked life as well to rescue victims, never-principled leadership determined to save as many lives as possible given the situation.

All bad news is personal.

Saving Rizal

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR, I HAVE THE CHANCE to write about Rizal. At an opinion writer, I have long since come to the conclusion that the Philippines is incomprehensible without reference to the passion and polymath. I have also belatedly come to realize, in the last two years or so, that Rizal is indispensable to an understanding of the present-day democratic project.

One quick example: the classic arguments for a free press are derived from American constitutional history. But I have only barely come to appreciate the difference in what's been generally regarded as the genius and polymath. I have also belatedly come to realize, in the last two years or so, that Rizal is indispensable to an understanding of the present-day democratic project.

It is said, that is, now Rizal built from the "sense" intervention understanding" that Senator Constitutional amendments against a long time ago, and the "sense" intervention understanding" to vote a phrase) that dictators prosper generations.

* * *

A hundred and thirteen years ago today, the two leaders of the Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto, among other pressing matters, a plan to rescue Rizal the next day from the firing squad. "Pupuga nagpasiya sila at bilisan na magsalakay si Dr. Jose Rizal upang sa mga kamay na Kastila'y hindi na matuloy ang kanyang kamatayan," Santiago Alvarez, commander-in-chief of the Magdiwang army, recollected in "Ang katipunan at ang Rebolusyong," the memoirs he started in Bilibid in 1896 and completed in 1928. The confirmed: "Napagpulungan ng Kataas-taasan ang pagpapasiyahan ng mga Kawal na sumalakay sa bayan ng Dapitan sa hangad mapalaya ng gabing iyon, si Dr. Rizal, at ihalalo ay mga magsipagsalakay ng pagtatol at lutuyan sa bigkasang sadyan ng pahihirap."

(While I am grateful to Paula Carolina Haley for giving General Alvarez's memoirs a much needed boost by bringing them back in print, I guess my curiosity shortened as I read her version. In a word, I found her translation problematic. Instead of the "simple, straightforward English" she promises in her Translator's Note, we often get unnecessarily convoluted, even pretentious, language: "na sayasay ng Magdalo" becomes "on the initiative of the Magdalo faction," instead of the simple, straightforward "on [the] Magdalo's initiative," "hangad mapalaya

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

IN THE MATTER OF PLACING SOME AREAS IN THE COUNTRY UNDER COMELEC CONTROL IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2010 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

MELO, Jose A.R., *Chairman*
SARMIENTO, Rene V., *Commissioner*
FERRER, Nicodemo T., *Commissioner*
TENORIO, Lucenito N., *Commissioner*
TUAZON, Armando C., *Commissioner*
YUSOPH, Elias R., *Commissioner*
LARRAZABAL, Gregorio Y., *Commissioner*

PROMULGATED:
December 15, 2009

RESOLUTION NO. 8584

The Commission on Elections, by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166 and other election laws, RESOLVED, as it hereby RESOLVED, to promulgate the following guidelines in placing any political division, subdivision unit or area under COMELEC CONTROL:

Section 1. Inclusion the Executive Governor – The Commission may place under its immediate and direct control and supervision any political division, subdivision, unit or area affected by "serious armed threats".

The term "serious armed threats" shall refer to the commission of terrorism, rebellion, private armies or organized violence, violent public protests by large committed terrorism, fraud or other election irregularities and intimidation of land by disrupt the holding of free, peaceful, honest, orderly and credible elections in any political division, subdivision, unit or area.

Section 2. Powers and functions of the Commissioner – The authority shall be exercised by the Commission En Banc and to this recommendation as pursuant. In furtherance thereof, the Commission shall:

a. Take immediate and direct control and supervision over all national and local officials and employees required by law to perform duties and/or comply with certain prohibitions relative to the conduct of the elections in the political division, subdivision, area or unit concerned; and

b. Exercise full control and supervision over all national and local law enforcement agencies as well as military officers and men assigned or deployed in the political division, subdivision, unit or area concerned.

For immediate and effective control of the political division, subdivision, unit or area concerned, the Commission shall exercise such authority where COMELEC control had been imposed.

Section 3. Special Task Force. – To ensure the conduct of free, peaceful, orderly, honest and credible elections in such political subdivisions, and/or area placed under COMELEC control, a Special Task Force shall be created. The Commission shall designate a Commissioner designated by the Commission as Task Force Head, and as Members, the Regional Election Director concerned, the highest-ranking officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the highest-ranking officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) assigned in the area.

All the decisions of the Head of the Task Force or whenever appropriate, the majority decision of the Members of the Task Force, the Commission may be appointed to the Special Task Force.

Section 4. Powers and Duties of the Special Task Force. – The Special Task Force shall have the following powers and duties:

a. To supervise and control the administrative activities and transactions of local government units in the localities under the Commission's control and enforcing the full compliance with the election laws and prohibitions under Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code, particularly on but not limited to, the establishment of public funds, the construction of public works, instruments of public information, the assignment of public service officials and employees as well as police and military officers and personnel;

b. To oversee the effective and necessary distribution, assignment and deployment of officers and personnel of the PNP as well as officers and men of the AFP in the locality concerned, and place under the control the officers and men of the other enforcement of the law on the firearms ban, security personnel of candidates and private citizens, the appointment or use of special policemen, the election purposes and other prohibitions under the pertinent provisions of Sec. 261 of the Omnibus Election Code and Sec. 32, Sec. 33 and Sec. 34 of Republic Act No. 7166;

c. To deputize the public force and assign additional military troops whenever necessary to quell any possible outbreak of violence and maintain peace and order in the locality concerned;

d. When necessary, to substitute a whole unit of the public force assigned in the locality concerned with another police unit or with an adequate unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines;

e. To relieve any police or military officer or personnel who may be found unsuitable for continuance in his present assignment in the locality concerned, transfer or reassign to positions any such member of the police or military unit;

f. To receive all examinations, formations issued under the firearms ban to candidates and their bodyguards, and cancel all permits to carry firearms outside residence granted to residents of the political division, subdivision, unit or area concerned, as peace and order conditions in the locality demand;

g. To act as the enforcement arm of the Commission in effecting and implementing its specific orders, rulings, resolutions and decisions;

h. To adopt appropriate measures to safeguard and ensure the holding of free, peaceful, orderly, honest and credible elections in the political division, subdivision, unit or area under Comelec control; and

i. To submit periodic situation reports to the Commission through the chief election officer.

Except when prior approval or authority of the Commission En banc is required, the Special Task Force decisions and orders in connection herewith, shall be final and immediately executory, unless modified, reversed or revoked by the Commission En banc.

Section 5. Support of the PNP and AFP Chiefs. – The PNP and the AFP are hereby directed to render support, provide personnel, equipment, vehicles and other transportation facilities as the Special Task Force may require.

Section 6. Duration of Comelec Control. – When a political division, subdivision, unit or area is placed under COMELEC control, such shall continue to be in full force and in effect until the end of the election period, unless otherwise lifted by the Commission.

Section 7. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Section 8. Dissemination. – The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation, and give this widest dissemination.

SO ORDERED.

JOSE A.R. MELO
Chairman

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

LUCENITO N. TAGLE
Commissioner

ARMANDO C. VELASCO
Commissioner

(On Official Business)
ELIAS R. YUSOPH
Commissioner

GREGORIO Y. LARRAZABAL
Commissioner

PE No. 6 288

What's life, family without honor?

JUSTICE IS PERPETUATED NOT only when a judge renders an unjust and erroneous decision but equally so when he slides his enemy duty to dispense justice, worse, if he does so because of cronyism.

Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Leandro E. Gomez openly refused to try the heinous criminal case against the Ampatuans after the case was reaffirmed before him. His cited disquiet of personal harm or violence against him and his family. "What is glory without family?" he rationalized.

This is plain cowardice. A judge, by the very function of his office, arms administrative and dispense justice regardless of all attendant risks. Risks come with the position. A soldier in the battlefield cannot refuse to engage the enemy because the enemy might retaliate and endanger his life or the safety of his family. The soldier must be summoned to death by flying signal for consolidation.

A judge who refuses to act as a non-lawyer before he knowledge and fear of his family is a coward. A police judge has no place in the judiciary. He must be dismissed from the service by the Supreme Court. There he may relegate to the private practice of law where he can choose his clients. A judge has no right to choose the cases he will try.

By refusing to try the Ampatuan mass murder case, Gomez did an injustice to cowardice, not only to the victims of the Maguindanao massacre but to the country as well. His cowardice will send a strong signal to the criminal elements in society: they might think that all they have to do is go scot-free is employ cronyism the judge.

What Gomez should have asked himself is: What is life and family without honor?

It is unfortunate that Gomez, like us, is a Bicolnon. We can indeed the incorporation of Bicolnon history. Aquino, and the courage of our heroine of Bicolnon like Raul S. Roco, Jose V. Sagaisay, Augusto "Boto" Salalima and many others.

I say Gomez is a disgrace to that Bicolnon and all Bicolnons. Let him resign!

—RENE RIVE,
San Isidro Lot 1971,
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Is Amando Doronila amenable to simulated 'martial law'?

I FIND DISTURBING THESE REquiet articles of Rolando Dionisio, commenting on the Maguindanao massacre—for being possibly the bizarre's most astute columnist.

Doronila advocates martial law under the current circumstances. And this is exactly when the informed public fears most about the Arroyo administration, which commits extrajudicial killings when the supposed criminals have retaliated.

By Sec. 21 article said it all: "No trusted martial law was widely accepted by the public, despite criticism that there was no crisis. Here to justify it, was that is required extraordinary powers to crush the warlords." (As Sec. 10 article supported President Macapagal Arroyo's declaration of martial law in Maguindanao. "When there is not the government has a strong case of rebellion or of invasion is a legal issue. But it is quite clear that martial law has enabled the government to immobilize the Ampatuan-led warlord clan and by so doing, to contain violence." For this reason, I do not believe that Doronila is doing what lawyers call "baiting the problem." Does this mean that we should expect an expanded martial law if "unidentified" emergencies arise in areas controlled by warlords allied with the administration? (There are many of them.) This would be very dangerous.

Marshall McLuhan was correct—the "human are constantly prepared to confront any process problems with the tools of yesterday. Martial get away with taking an emergency law that can't be done today. The proliferation of electronic technology—the cell phone, microwaves, broadband, satellite, internet and remote media expand the Maguindanao massacre. As it will expose other criminal warlords.

It is time for Mr. Arroyo's spokesman to stop.

—EUGENE R. CRUDDAS,
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Party-list system does not promote the common good

HERE IS A SUGGESTION THAT I think will benefit the House of Representatives and the nation.

In the Interim areas of Sec. 13, 2009, there was an article about a very commendable move of the Commission on Elections to cancel of some groups from the roster of accredited party-list organizations.

In a democracy, the legislative branch's role is to enact laws for the common good. The party-list groups, by their very name and nature, are in the House to promote the interests of their respective sectors—which is quite opposed to the idea of serving the common good.

The lowest income of Congressmen of all party-list representatives, would be able to work more efficiently and productive by.

—ERNESTO L. RAMADA,
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9000 Cagayan de Oro City

LETTERS

Disability pension still empty promise

UNDER ON SEPTEMBER 2009, World War II veterans throughout the country were in a mode to protest documents proving their service as those. They stored a Special Bonus of Secretary (SPS) to request the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, so that they would be paid the administrative authority pensions as directed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The veterans were hopeful and jubilant, they willingly spent extra money traveling that the authorized Republic Act 9049, as amended by Republic Act 9963, would immediately be implemented.

September 2009 passed but the veterans received no administrative disability pension. Some time in December 2009, veterans Lope Bill, the regional vice president of a veterans' organization in the Bicol region, called the press conferences and officers of Congressmen Imelda Marcos-Romualdez to a meeting and to express their suppression notice from the PVAO that the administrative disability pension would be paid by the end of the month.

But 2009 is almost on read, but the veterans who are now in their twilight years are now wondering whether they will live long enough to receive the pension in question, which has twice been promised them by the President—by ways in her speeches during the Araw ng Kagitingan commemoration in Mt. Samat, Bataan on April 9 of 2007 and 2008.

They now continue that the pensions are administrative disability pension will be again made a promise, this time by Lakas-Kampi-CMD presidential candidate Gilbert Teodoro, to answer the needs of the families of all the veterans.

World War II veterans and the AFP-PC and PNP veterans who, one by one, are being called to the bosom of the Creator should now be paid regardless of their political inclinations.

—GREGORIO O. PITOGO JR.,
Major (ret.),
Barangay Commander,
Inner Commission Norte 6500

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Justice

BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

Magallanes Drive, Intramuros
1002 Manila

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) partially implemented the use of the new Arrival/Departure (A/D) Cards since June 1, 2009 upon the request of the Airline Operators Council (AOC) to give them reasonable time prior to its full implementation.

Accordingly, starting **01 January 2010**, the **NEW ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE (A/D) CARDS** will be fully used by all arriving and departing passengers in the country. The Bureau of Immigration (BI) shall not accept and process the old A/D Cards starting the aforesaid date.

All international airlines and passengers are enjoined to fully cooperate in the utilization of this new Arrival/Departure (A/D) Cards to avoid unnecessary inconvenience.

BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

Resign, let RP start all over again

THE NOV. 23 MA. guindanao massacre, whose victims ended all women, journalists and lawyers, is the worst crime ever in the history of the Philippines.

What's more, amazing, it exposed the failure of the national leadership to provide epidemic pressure in the area, despite the presence of the armed services of government, to enforce the laws of the land.

It is very sorry time, the people of Mindanao have been looking to the national government for solutions to their problems. But the national leadership helps only their allies, even supplying them with more powers, but by the allies' enemies who would want to ensure their freedom and rights, is cast into simple protection.

The Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, instead of being important in the implementation of the law, engage in business most of the time. They have one standard for friends and another for foes—the Maguindanao standard has created an environment conducive to murder and manslaughter.

If only for this reason, our all military agencies, the national leadership, as well as the top brass of the PNP and AFP, should resign and allow the country to start all over again for good.

—EUGENIO "TOTING" U.M. NAVAL, Cavite

President wants justice done by June

From page A1

barely and then as quickly as possible."

Ebdane said the Palace was not be satisfied with the Department of Justice (DOJ) term limitedprobe of the multiple murder and rebellion charges against the provincial bigwigs as this date had given Mr. Arroyo and her allies crucial victories in Maguindanao in the 2004 and 2007 elections.

"I haven't seen anything yet to tell me that people are dragging their feet on this," he told reporters. "I think people are starting on this as fast as the process will allow them to the administration of impartial justice."

Ebdane also announced that the Cabinet would decide today at its meeting in Baguio City where the Tiny Family is spending the holidays, on the lifting of the state of emergency clamped in Maguindanao following the election-related massacre Nov. 23.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon were the only and drew non-committal the emergency measure.

"It's not necessary. It only creates instability in the minds of the people," Pimentel said.

The President declared martial law in Maguindanao, the neighboring province of Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato City on Dec. 4, but lifted it eight days later.

Prosecutors' decision

Saturday, state prosecutors wrapped up a preliminary investigation on complaints filed by the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation on multiple murder charges against around 200 people allegedly involved in the massacre.

The prosecution is expected to issue a decision by Feb. 2 on whether to formally charge in court the respondents that include 11 members of the Ampatuan clan.

The members of the Ampatuan clan, including Sen. Zaldy Ampatuan of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and his brother Sajid, the acting Maguindanao governor, were the filed murder-and-illegal detention complaints.

Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said the panel was well within the 60-day deadline for the filing of the murder charges in court.

Assistant Solicitor Jr., mayor of Maguindanao's Datu Unsay town, is the only member of the prosecution panel who formally charged with 57 counts of murder in connection with the massacre of supporters of his political rival and 30 journalists. He is detained in the NBI facility in Manila.

His trial is to begin Jan. 5 at a Quezon City court that will hold proceedings in Camp Crame.

Rebellion complaint

Also yesterday, a panel of state prosecutors began a preliminary investigation on complaints of rebellion filed by the PNP and the NBI against nearly 600 people.

Rufo Piamonte Lambero Salmo gave the parties until Jan. 12 to submit counter-affidavits and before making a decision on who to charge in court.

One of the alleged leaders of the rebellion, Major Alexander Tamayo of Batra's town, showed up at the justice department to deny involvement in the case.

"We have many friends who can prove we don't have anything to do with this," Tamayo told reporters, pointing out that he is an honest, not a Maguindanaoan.

The PNP is deploying 200 policemen to secure the trial of Ampatuan Jr., according to 12nd Supt. Leonardo Espina. "We are very optimistic that it would be all systems go for the hearing," said the PNP spokesperson.

The NBI also is tightening security for Ampatuan Jr. amid reports that supporters passing an agent will arrange to get him out of jail.

NBI Deputy Director Ruben Ongoy said agents securing the alleged mastermind of the massacre had been issued bulletproof vests to replace ordinary ones issued three years ago.

"With the bulletproof on the IDs, it would be difficult to produce killers," Ongoy said. While reports from Orlando U. Vigueras, Marvin Bartolome, Jonathan E. Andrade, Marlon Ramos and Christine O. Avendaño

Arms suppliers in Maguindanao probed

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE Director General Jesus Verzosa has put under investigation former and current logistics officers in Maguindanao who were probably granted firearms to political warlords in the province.

"There was an unauthorized selling of firearms and this is now the subject of an investigation," Verzosa told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday. "We are investigating the logistics officers who were there before and at the time of the massacre."

According to Verzosa, at least 30 of nearly 900 high-powered firearms that government forces recovered in Maguindanao during last month's massacre of 57 people came from the PNP arsenal.

"We are now accounting the firearms and ammunition that were seized in Maguindanao. There could have been an illegal purchase and this is what we're considering now," he said.

However, the PNP chief said the Ampatuan clan, blamed for the massacre, might have also acquired weapons illegally from private dealers.

He said Director Leon Tuason of the PNP Directorate for Logistics had ordered an inventory of all firearms issued to different police units in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Verzosa said the serial numbers of the PNP-issued firearms would be compared to the ballistic recovered from the massacre site to see if these were used in massacre.

He said that investigators had subjected to ballistic test a 0.5-submachine gun that the military recently found from the personal caged in Sharif Aguak.

The firearm was recovered from a dug up cache along with several M-16 rifles, a .50 cal. machine gun and an M-60 machine gun.

Verzosa said that witnesses had requested that the alleged mastermind of the massacre, feuded Ampatuan Jr., used a 0.5 submachine gun in the killings.

Marlon Ramos

TIGHT SECURITY Policemen secure the Department of Justice building in Manila in expectation of the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people, including 30 journalists, across for the preliminary investigation by state prosecutors.

Patriarch gave GMA big win that fueled his rise to power

From page A1

In 2005, the President appointed the candidate of Maguindanao's son, Zaldy, the governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It was, in fact, a political masterstroke.

The young Ampatuan handily won over Datu Ibrahim "Toto" Paglas, a former governor of Datu Piang town who was supported by Muslim civil societies and many Mindanao political leaders, including myself.

As ARMM governor, Zaldy Ampatuan facilitated the realization of his father's political goal. Now Sunnis were restored out of four to five barangays to allow political underlings to dip into ISFs [internal revenue allotments].

Ampatuan also attempted to create a new province, Shariff Kabunsuan, purportedly intended to establish some political autonomy for the Muntons and Sinsuats, thus eliminating those two influential and powerful political families from Maguindanao.

He also pushed for the creation of a third congressional district in Maguindanao and the Pagbans, obviously to make sure that there would be no more threat to the Ampatuans in Kabuntalan Valley.

Court scuttles partition

But Ampatuan's plans backfired. I did not agree to his idea of yanking the town of Shariff Aguak from the legislative district of Maguindanao to satisfy the land area requirement for the province. The Supreme Court also rebuffed the ARMM legislation creating the new province, noting it was not within the powers of the regional government.

Ampatuan's advisers used the court decision on the Shariff Kabunsuan province creation for him to resign as governor of Maguindanao. Zaldy Ampatuan later appointed his brother, Sajid, as Maguindanao acting governor and his brother, Akmad, as acting vice governor.

Accusing Ampatuan of the plan was actually to allow Ampatuan to run for a new term again in 2010 as he had not completed his third and final term.

The appointment of Sajid was reportedly protested by his brothers. And the Ampatuan patriarch's worries are who wanted to be governor. This almost led to a family tragedy as Sajid, according to reports, barricaded his room to stop Andal Jr. at all cost.

In spite of his loyal setbacks, the clan's political influence continued to wield power and amass wealth beyond imagination.

Amassing great wealth

As a politician who lacked out of a plan to run for Maguindanao governor in 1996, purportedly because "he only had P50 million in his war chest," it is mind-boggling how Ampatuan Sr. and his family would have accumulated such wealth in just eight years.

The release of the IRA to the ARMM areas is public knowledge. Most politicians in the area consider the IRA as their own personal funds, a reward for their political exercises, which also sent them tens of millions of pesos.

It is not surprising to hear of stories of town mayors seeking the region living outside of their towns for the whole period after the election and coming back only during elections time to buy votes and win again. Then, they will disappear again.

But the IRA alone, one, including that of the ARMM, would not be enough for Ampatuan and his family to amass so much wealth within such a short period of time.

There are suggestions that a flourishing illegal drug trade in the region was behind the wealth, but this seems unbelievable.

What is believable is a money-making scam which involves the construction of ghost projects with "dummy" contractors and it involves the transfer of funds from the different departments to provinces and municipalities through bidfixture where between 40 percent and 60 percent of the amount for them and other patrons.

With 40-50 percent already taken off, what usually happens is the

He said that investigators had subjected to ballistic test a 0.5-submachine gun that the military recently found from the personal caged in Sharif Aguak.

The firearm was recovered from a dug up cache along with several M-16 rifles, a .50 cal. machine gun and an M-60 machine gun.

Verzosa said that witnesses had requested that the alleged mastermind of the massacre, feuded Ampatuan Jr., used a 0.5 submachine gun in the killings.

Marlon Ramos

Massacre in DVD?

MAGUINDANAO—THE COUNTRY'S first exhibition will definitely not hesitate to fan the public viewing of "Maguindanao Massacre 11/23/09," now being sold from underground.

For its graphic content, the videotape may not need to shame any hardcore Quentin Tarantino freak.

The first major footage shows blood-soaked and bullet-filled spectacles of the massacre victims. There are heads, feet, legs, hands and other parts of human body. It is essentially like filming of police crime scene operations from Hollywood movies.

The dialogue is not scripted, showing some dramatizations, but, anger, surprise and confusion. And they do not come from the professional, whose lines are recited down to the last second.

The camera work is amateurish. No variety in its installation. The musical score emanates from the mechanical grooming of a hairdresser.

There are no closing credits either, just no one wants to own it.

The origin of the DVD is not known. No vendor is interested to sell the quality copies from a supplier in Shariff Aguak City.

The reporter was able to secure a copy of The Star, a tabloid P=25, from a vendor who requested anonymity as he feared for his life. *Jaffy Ng-ay, Bayan and Jinjing Macatuno, Inquirer Mindanao*

Voters' surge seen on last day of list-up

From page A1

Supreme Court based on the petition of the Bukonnet party-list group, is scheduled Dec. 23, 24 and Dec. 28-29.

The first schedule of registration started in December 2008 and ended Oct. 31.

Comelec officials said they pushed the deadline earlier to allow them to prepare the ballots for the automated elections in May. Each ballot is expected to contain 200 names for the candidates printed on multiwidths.

The last week of submission of voters' applications in Gen. Luna saw long queues in local Comelec offices and rising tension as they can be impatient voters and weary poll workers.

Some offices even extended their office hours until late evening to accommodate the late comers.

Last-minute registrants

Teopisto Elma, the poll official in charge of the registration, said he expected hordes of last-minute registrants at the Comelec offices today from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"That's the attitude of the Filipinos," Elma said. "There will be no more extensions. If we keep extending it, we will not be able to finish."

According to the Comelec, there are already some 49.2 million registered voters for the May 2010 national and local polls. That figure is higher than the 45 million voters that initially for the 2007 balloting.

Elma said the extension brought new problems to the Comelec, because there was no time for them to print and ship new forms, officials were authorized to photocopy the documents, he said.

The extension also means that the Comelec has to include an avalanche of new names to the certified voters' list, which are being prepared by regional offices.

Gloria, politicos urged: Don't lie on Rizal Day

From page A1

right to invoke Dr. Jose Rizal's name again for wronging on her proxies.

"Will Ms Arroyo tell the nation another lie, if not lies, during the 113th anniversary of Rizal's death on Dec. 30?" Ms Arroyo said. Jose Concio, president of the Rizal Youth Movement-Southern Tagalog, said in a text message yesterday.

As far as Renato Reyes, Bayan Muna secretary general, is concerned, Ms Arroyo is "the last person who should invoke Rizal's name for her lust for power and his lying and cheating ways."

"The 2002 Rizal Day speech where she said she wouldn't run again has twice been reviewed as GMA now finds herself running yet again, but for a lower position. She definitely will make Rizal turn in his grave," Reyes told the Inquirer.

Reyes was referring to Ms Arroyo's recent announcement that she will for a congressional seat in Pampanga in the May polls.

Antonio Tinio, national chair of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, said Rizal "died for the truth as he saw it in his writings. Arroyo's years in power have been about suppressing the truth—about Hello, Garci!, Jose Pidal, the Win-Win deal, and a host of other controversies."

Julio Leonard Montesclaros, secretariat of the Ripublikan Kilusang Magsasaka-Makibaka (RPM-Makibaka) group, asked Ms Arroyo and other politicians to "stop dragging Rizal's name as they pursue their political plans and personal interests."

"That's blasphemy," Montesclaros said in a text message.

Kabataan party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino said Rizal's legacy and ideas were not just for Rizal Day but for all Filipinos.

"They are guilty of reminding (Ms Arroyo) not to use Rizal for their political plans. Ms Arroyo reasoned the sanctity of Rizal Day in 2002," Palatino said.

Bayan Rep. Satur Ocampo said the Rizalistas might have a good reason to ask Ms Arroyo to refrain from invoking Rizal in her public statements because she had used Rizal Day to make a promise that she violated.

"For to ask all politicians to do the same may not be just as some may sincerely wish to invoke Rizal's name to show the depth of their legitimate advocacies," said Ocampo, who is running for senator in the May elections.

Ms Arroyo vowed not to run for president in her 2002 speech in Baguio City marking the 106th death anniversary of Rizal.

She said she wanted to cure the country from further divisiveness and pledged to devote the rest of her presidency to strengthening the economy, creating more jobs and fighting corruption.

She said that on her presidency up to 2004 and soon amid wiretapping charges captured in the "Hello Garci" taped conversations purportedly between her and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Editor Teddyboy S. Molundres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Dehesa

SPORTS

Tougher Corus chess campaign for sensational So

BEGINS ON THE CREST OF A SENSATIONAL World Cup campaign, Grandmaster Wesley So sets out for another big challenge in the 72nd Corus International tournament beginning Jan. 13 in Wijk aan Zee, the Netherlands.

The 18-year-old So, who ruled Group C of this tournament last year, is to tie tougher piled with the elevation to the Category-15 Group B, where the average Elo rating of players is 2627.

With his impressive performance in the World Chess Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, early this month, So's Elo will climb to a record 2656 in the Jan. 1 Fide quarterly ratings.

So will be seeded sixth in the 10-the-wanna-meet behind fellow 18th Arkadij Naiditsch of Germany (Elo 2690), Ivan Sokolov of Bosnia (Elo 2677), Pentala Harikrishna of India (Elo 2672), Emil Sutovsky of Israel (Elo 2666) and Shi Hao of China (Elo 2665).

Also in the group are Englishmen David Howell (England), Tomi Nyback of Finland, Vassilios Kotronias of the United States, Parimarjan Negi of India, 40GM Anton Kharlov of Slovakia and Dutch 48th Erwin l' Ami, Anish Giri and Daniel Stellwagen.

The champion will enter Corus's Group A title race with Olli Wesly Tomchak of Ukraine and five-time tournament winner Viswanathan Anand of India. The Ukrainian won among the big-name players that he defeated in the World Cup.

"It's a new challenge for me, but I will do my best to bring home to the country again," said So, who posted 9.5 points on seven wins, five draws and one loss en route to the Group C title last year.

"Hopefully, the new year will be just as good. I feel better, for me."

Previous Corus champions include Boris Spassky, Anatoly Karpov, Vladimir Kramnik and Garry Kasparov. GMB/VP Reyes

SO. Ranked sixth

Arum submits 'final proposal'

Nevada panel has last say on testing

By Tim Dahlberg, AP Boxing Writer

LAS VEGAS—PROMOTER BOB ARUM DELIVERED WHAT HE SAID would be his last proposal Sunday to salvage the fight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr., which has been on life support since a blood testing dispute.

Under Arum's proposal, the Nevada Athletic Commission would have the final say in how much testing there would be for the fight and when it would take place. Pacquiao's for The fight would go forward and there would be three blood tests—none within 30 days of the fight—unless the commission decided otherwise at a mid-January meeting.

"We will go along with what the Nevada commission decides," Arum said. "We will give them a blank check. We want this fight to go forward."

Arum said Pacquiao's side would go no further than the proposal, and that he will begin negotiations Monday with Floyd Mayweather Jr. for March 13 date. The weight limit was supposed to take place on.

The question is tougher than on his statements by those in Pacquiao's camp that there could be a compromise on blood testing if it is not done by the United States Anti-Doping Agency and in the final days before the fight.

It leaves the fate of the fight in jeopardy since they would likely be little opposite by Nevada regulators to go beyond the urine tests now required by state law.

The absence of the Nevada commission and Mayweather's representatives did not immediately return phone calls Sunday (Monday in Manila).

All other issues were settled, but the nasty dispute over attempts by Mayweather's camp to introduce surrogate blood testing to pre-boxing for the first time make it increasingly unlikely it will happen.

Mayweather's representatives backed off their insistence on using the USADA over the weekend, but continued to insist on random blood and urine tests with a controlled unacceptable to both sides.

Pacquiao's camp remained willing to agree to that up until the last few days when the commission turned down betting to declare lawsuits against those alleging that Pacquiao used performance-enhancing drugs to move up in weight and win titles in seven different weight classes.

It's all ridiculous nonsense because Mayweather doesn't want to do the fight or in attempt by (Haymonlaw promoter) Richard Schaefer to smear Manny Pacquiao," Arum said. "He will deal with their legality."

Ironically, Mallongi is one of those who have supported in interviews that Pacquiao could have used something to be able to dominate fighters in the higher weight classes.

If the fight is not held March 13, there is still a chance it could happen in September after the two have other fights.

FLOYD Mayweather Jr.'s drug-test dare is: "I smoke seven cartons in doesn't want to fight Pacquiao."

MANNY Pacquiao will be pitted against Paul Malignaggi if the match-up fight against Mayweather falls through.

Pinoy ABL imports prove their worth

By Jeannie W. Pape

ACIRAMAD

YERAMA

FILIPINO IMPORTS have impressively held their own in the fledgling Asean Basketball League, but it's not easy task every time their teams go up against the league-leading Philippine Patriots.

"I usually mail up getting a casual jog every [on the Internet], " said Roger [ex-Al Avigaya, one of 11 Filipinos under-ing Yet other imports in the region's first basketball league.

"Our coach would tell me to the three players are, how they play." He's added to fill spots. "It's hard. Some of them are my former teammates, so it feels like I'm fostering them."

The Singapore Slingers dealt the Patriots' first loss with Rogers playing a key role in a 74-69 decision last Oct. 18 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

The Brunei Barracudas, powered by ex-pros Kiko Adriano, Don Camaso and Lee Arreola, also inflicted the Patriots' only other loss (on Dec. 13).

"It's hard emotionally because I played [for the Patriots], and Brunei's Filipino coach Bong Ramos allowed his Barracudas to run [against the Patriots] with a 93-70 drubbing in the Brunei Indoor Stadium.

"But of the game time I'm also hoping [for the Patriots]," he said.

"This is Brunei's first professional basketball team, so for me to get one win over the Patriots, we're already achieved our goal. It's a difficult job."

Other Filipinos seeing action in the the six-nation, home-and-away tournament are former PBA guard Benjie Paras for Indonesia's Satria Muda Bertuna, ex-Liga Filipinan cagers Mcke Reyes, Dion Belleza and Axel Doroshi for the Thailand Tigers; and former varsity standouts Ford Magnaton, Rudy Lingganay and Jiro Bandayrog for the Kuala Lumpur Dragons.

"There are a lot of fellow Filipinos," said Yerama.

"Like with the language, sometimes it's hard to understand your coach.

"The training is also different. In the Philippines, we run, sprint, there's a lot of focus on our physical conditioning. Here, it's more on mental. We also spend a lot of time on plays, because a lot of them locals are still learning the game."

SEA Games gold harvest squandered

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE WON'T HURT YOU?

Well, maybe.

But what happens when Filipino athlete governors doesn't get properly rewarded for the poor taxpayers to see?

Imagine our Manny Pacquiao title fight in Las Vegas getting blacked out here on home television for lack of sponsors.

• • •

That's unthinkable.

You say, while the ever-shining Filipino hope continued to be shortened by assorted ringsides, there's always Pacquiao on the world stage for us to cling on.

It truly starts: On hand here our Generale rule by the Formies and ex-juggling pride while prepping up the Pinoy spirit.

So, those in need of inspiration, the power Pinoy moves to stuffing pedestrians two weeks Pacquiao conquests, against Britain Ricky Hatton and Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto this year.

• • •

Easy to expect this, but the Filipino viewers can also dwell tangled on the sporting beat.

The same after SEA Games, the government television network, failed to cover the Philippine participation in the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

So, that is not to say that the thrilling 80 victories, tilled into one, in Vientiane could've overshadowed an outstanding Pacquiao win abroad.

No way.

• • •

Just the same, it goes without saying that any of these PH victories in Laos would've added to that towering feeling regularly delivered by Pacquiao.

For the record, triumphs of Team Philippines in various fields accounted for a total of 38 gold medals and earned the country from languishing at a middling sixth place in the overall standings.

On Dec. 16 alone, out there at the Olympiano Stadium of the Lao National University, the Philippine national anthem was played a total of three times.

Three brothers Filipinos, Amit Gobaco, Aiver Gee Ignacio and Annie Albania, each won a gold medal in women's boxing, helping PH to top of the event.

Hands down, the team of the tournament was pretty Alice Aquari, who finished her 8-kilometer individual assignment with a two-day-eight hand.

She became an instant hit with members of the foreign contingent.

Aquari later told the lensmen that, with the big investment, which could amount to about P1 million, she would need would her mother, a domestic helper in Hong Kong for the last 10 years, home.

• • •

There, was always heart-warming, elevating Filipino victim on various levels.

But all these were practically kept a secret from boastful viewers.

NBN 4 squandered the opportunity to deliver the home when it failed in its task as government carrying station.

• • •

It was a no-contest after NBN bigger claimed they could not afford the meager broadcast rights demanded by Laos organizers.

The result: Overworked daily rungs earnestly failing to get what they rightfully deserved.

No money?

Maybe. But the main reason was the obvious belief of Ginga Bautista, your now-wavering press secretary, that he owes it to keep a faithful clientele of President Macapagal-Arroyo's multibillion pass travelogue.

The demure-eyed Cebuano still did some bad in-goods.

BARE EYE

Arnold Trinidad

WINNING COMBINATION
HILLO equipment player Calvin "Ian" Cunio (left) of Ateneo High School carries the meet-record with 16-and-under girls finalist Samantha Caputo (center) and their coach Gee Abacan after topping the 14-and-under boys' event at the recent 2nd Phillip Ofilan vs. Age Group Track Championships at the Rizal Memorial Track Oval.

RP Int'l junior golf draws Asian aces

YOUNG ACES FROM SOUTHEAST-ern Japan, Singapore and Malaysia will jet their skills against the country's best in the 10th Philippine International Junior Golf Championships slated Jan. 6 to 8 on the Ayala-Greenland Golf Club in Calamba City.

"We want junior golf, honoring some of the world's best, to kick off the sports year 2010," said Rolando "Boy" Gaminde of the organizing Philippine Junior Golf Federation and Asia Gamefa sports.

The event will feature 12 players from Malaysia, eight from Taiwan, six from South Korea and five from Singapore.

They will be ranged against a crack local field led by Adrian Cuyler and Bianca Bell (16) in the event personnel by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Tournament chair and former junior golf ace Gerard Gaminde said their will be a practice round and a welcome dinner on Jan. 5.

Smart Gilas tangles with Giles-led Lebanon squad

By Jose Marasco

GILAS GETS A CHANCE TO GET BACK at the Smart Gilas Pilipinas national team they dropped him from its lineup recently.

The 6-foot-11 former NBA prospect Giles and ex-PBA import Sean Johnson will beef up Lebanon club team Al Riyadi in the tough 21st Dubai International basketball tournament that will also feature Iranian and Israeli squads.

It will be the first serious international stint for the 30-year-old Giles since he was handled by Serbian coach Rajko Toroman, who is tasked by the homebound basketball ng Pilipinas to bring the country back to the Olympics in 2012.

Aside from Al Riyadi, the best club teams from Jordan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Egypt are seeing action in the tournament scheduled Jan. 14 to 23.

They are Jordan's Zain and Al-Ittihad Sports Club, Al Ahlas Aleppo and Al-Wehdat Aleppo from Syria, Al Ittihad Alexandria (Egypt) and United Arab Emirates national team.

According to online reports, Giles has inked a multimillion deal with Al Riyadi, the top team in Lebanon with 39 championships in the professional ranks.

"Giles is looking for some payback after being dropped from the RP national development team for his resting behaviors," the website cbasilicon.com announced.

Giles, who played college ball for Oregon State and Kansas, joins a team that features local hero Fadi El Khatib, Ali Mahmoud, Jean Abdel Noor, Joe Vogel and Johnson.

A former San Miguel Beer import, Johnson led the Brewmen to the 2003 Commissioner's Cup finals where they lost to Red Bull headed by former Ateneo University standout Yeng Lang in six games.

Jamal Simpson, Giles' replacement, had an unimpressive debut for Gilas in the PBA. But Toroman said the NBA journeyman has yet to regain his old form.

"He has never played actively for 10 months," said Toroman. "CJ is more athletic, but Simpson is a better defender."

GILES

Cardona paces PBA scoring race

By Jose Marasco

MARK CARDONA IS ONE GUY WHO SETS a high standard in his craft.

No wonder the Talk 'N Text wingman was far from satisfied despite leading the scoring derby entering the tournament's all-the-KFC-PBA Philippine Cup elimination round.

"I want to shoot my game a notch higher to help my team more," said the 6-foot-1 Cardona, who has a leading scoring average of 21.8 points after 15 games.

CARDONA

The three-time KFC-Most-PBA Press Corps Player of the Week has been a key factor in most of the games of the Tropang Texters, who are running third with a 10-5 record. San Miguel Beer is leading the pack at 12-3 followed by Alaska at 11-4.

"All the teams are jockeying for position, and winning games can be required all the way to the end of the eliminations," said Cardona.

But the all-around boxer goes to Arnulfo Ramos, who is a leading figure in practically all departments and is a top contender for the Best Player of the Conference award.

Barako, a new acquisition by San Miguel from Burger King, is No. 2 in scoring with an average of 18.2 points followed by Rain or Shine's Ronald Tubid (17.93), Kelly Williams of Sta. Lucia (17.2), Alaska's Willie Miller (16.1), and LA Tenorio (15.4), Jimmy Yap of Purefoods (15.1), TNT's Jimmy Alapag (14.7), Barby Raymundo (14.1) and San Miguel's Dondon Hontiveros (14.07).

Williams, runner MVP in 2007-08, is the only rebounder in the 14.0 league figure followed by Coke's Asi Taulava (10.3), Ramos (10.2), Harvey Carey (9.3), Rafi Reavis (9.2), Dorian Pena (8.9), Gabby Espinas (8.8) and Jay-R Reyes (7.78).

Besides Cardona, Ramos and Williams, other players in strong contention for the BPC award are Tubid, Miller, Tenorio, Yap, Alapag, Raymundo, Hontiveros and Ryan Reyes, who is the rookieseason leader in steals (2.07).

CELTICS' Rasheed Wallace steams against Clippers' Brian Skinner.

Davis derails Celtics' streak

Beats buzzer with fallaway

LOS ANGELES—BARON DAVIS HIT A long, fallaway jump shot at the buzzer as the Los Angeles Clippers dramatically snapped the Boston Celtics' nine-game road-winning streak with a 92-90 victory on Tuesday.

Rajon Rondo scored 20 points for the Celtics, but missed two potential go-ahead free throws—actually three, including another that was waved off—with 1.3 seconds left in just the Celtics' second loss in 16 games.

Davis had 24 points and 13 assists for the Clippers, who stopped a three-game losing streak.

Ramon Sessions hit a desperate 25-foot jumper off a drive-and-dish pass from Davis with 0.5 seconds left.

Boston (20-6) had 12 points and eight rebounds while playing mostly on the perimeter with a sore back for the Celtics, whose three-game winning streak ended two days after their impressive Christmas victory over the Orlando Magic. Boston managed just two points in the final 5:30.

At New York, Tony Parker scored 22 points, Manu Ginobili added 17, and the duo made the key plays in the final minutes to power San Antonio to a 95-85 victory over New York.

Tim Duncan finished with 13 points while being outplayed by David Lee, but Parker and Ginobili combined for all of San Antonio's points after the game was tied at 81 with under 2½ minutes remaining. The Spurs won for the eighth time in 13 games following a three-game skid earlier this month.

Lee recorded a season high with 26 points on 11-of-13 shooting and grabbed 10 rebounds, but the Knicks finished 2-2 on their five-game homestand after losing the last two. Danilo Gallinari and Al Harrington each scored 17.

At Cleveland, LeBron James scored 29 points and Mo Williams added 28 points as Cleveland used a flurry of 3-pointers and a stifling defense for their ninth win in 10 games, beating Houston, 108-85.

James and Williams combined to make five triples in less than three minutes early in the third quarter, stretching Cleveland's lead to 66-51. The margin didn't dip below 15 the rest of the way.

Shaquille O'Neal had 13 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers (24-8), who have won four straight. AP

OTHER RESULTS: Raptors 102, Nuggets 98; Hornets 108, Kings 98; Heat 111, Pacers 88

Patriots, Bengals clinch playoff spots; Colts lose

NEW YORK—THE NEW ENGLAND Patriots and Cincinnati Bengals clinched division titles and playoff spots but in a stunning upset, the previously unbeaten Indianapolis Colts lost to the New York Jets on Sunday.

The Colts, unbeaten in 14 starts this year and 23 regular-season games in total, finally crashed in a 29-15 loss at home on the regular season's penultimate weekend.

The Jets scored 19 consecutive points after the Colts had taken a 12-10 lead and pulled quarterback Peyton Manning and several other starters.

"Our guys played great. We found a way to win," Jets coach Rex Ryan told reporters. "We were just going to line up and play whoever we were there." Colts coach Jim Caldwell's down played the loss.

"A perfect season has never been one of our goals," said Caldwell, adding that the playoffs were more important.

In other NFL action, the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys advanced to the post-season and defending Super Bowl champions Pittsburgh kept their slim playoff hopes alive.

But the playoff-bound New Orleans Saints joined the Colts in posting a surprising Sunday loss, falling to Tampa Bay, 26-17.

The Patriots' (13-1) Tom Brady threw for four touchdowns, three to Randy Moss, to help his team beat the Jacksonville Jaguars (7-6) 35-7 at Foxborough, Massachusetts, and wrap up the AFC East title for the seventh time in nine years.

"It's the third of four we really need in our playing good football and I think today was one of our best 60 minutes that we have played all year," Brady told reporters.

Cincinnati (10-3) needed a six-yard touchdown pass from Carson Palmer to Chad Ochocinco with 2:03 left to claim the AFC North championship with a 17-14 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs (1-12).

The win was an emotional one for the Bengals, after wide receiver Chris Henry was buried during the week following his death in a fall from a pickup truck. Reuters

RP team mainstays rule PBC Youth tilt

TWO NATIONAL TEAM MAINstays picked up the first two gold medals in the 17th Philippine Bowling Congress Student-Youth tourney bowled on three pinsetter-less doubles at Bowling Inn in Taft Avenue, Manila.

Reza Tapia ruled the boys' singles event with a score of 1,323 in six games, while Lara Penaflor posted a 1,193 aggregate to top the girls' division.

Tapia, 19, who is a member of the national team, finished with an average of 220 pinfalls, rushed in the top following the late game collapse of fellow national pool member Edrich Florencio and nearly crowned fifth Youth international champion Rexarch Chua.

Florencio wound up with 1,267 for the silver, narrowly beating Chua's 1,256.

Alexis Sy also a national youth mainstay bowled a 1,119 total for the silver, while Lira Vivene topped the bronze with 1,111 in the girls' singles.

TRAP, though, grabbed the early lead in the overall team championship with nine points followed by the podium finishers of Florencio, Chua and Sy.

TRAP boosted by Penaflor's victory, stood second with six points.

Participants will also compete in the doubles event of the tourney sponsored by the Philippine Bowling Congress Youth Committee.

PENAFLOR

The Parag Segovia-coco Youth Perpetual Cup will be awarded to the overall team champion. Jasmine N. Pinpin

ALFA Romeo rounds Taronga Island on her way to Hobart, Australia.

Alfa Romeo retains slim lead

HOBART, AUSTRALIA—ALFA ROMEO'S two-day lead in the Sydney to Hobart race was under a late threat from four time winners and defending champion PWC-Dirt II as the leading yachts neared the finish line Monday.

The New Zealand-based lead boats of more than 20 nautical miles (22 miles, 37 kilometers) on Sunday and early Monday before WM Data XI closed to just 12 nautical miles (14 miles, 23 kilometers) with about 80 nautical miles (93 miles, 149 kilometers) left in the race. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Pasay 4-cocker fires off today

PASAY CITY COCKPIT'S 4TH WINGED COCKfest, the Kap Cheng and 4th 4-Cocker Derby, fires off at 3 p.m. today with some 80 roosters in tap.

Derby veterans Ronning Vergara and C. Perez are headlining the mixed match makes a guaranteed total of P400,000.

On Tuesday, Benny Galacio's entry "El-Ars Ta Pasay Int. 11" and Kap Cheng Mendoza's "DMW" pushed four wins each to nab the PCC 4-cock derby.

By Tep Cruiz
At San Lazaro LP

Tough NCA world championship derby slated

THE NATIONAL COCKERS ALliance (NCA) pits roosters against the best Filipinos and Americans cockfight breeders when it stages the World Championship Derby (WCD) on Jan. 12, 14 and 16 at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The NCA-WCD, also known as the "Olympics of cockfighting," is being held bi-annually for 20 years now.

The Philippines will field Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Ito Ynares, Gary Ramos, Pedro Hernandez, Elias Nagaño, JV Magnayon, Elmer Ngonayan, Arnold Asuncion, Mario Villanueva, James Uy, Wincy and Amado Ramos, Jimmy Ang, Jun Santiago, Ernie Asuncio, Bey Alfas, Hessie Mallillin, Tommy Chua and Danny dela Cruz, Tserilla, Eric dela Rosa, Danny Teves, Bebot Villar, Rudy Alfonso, Raul Alcober, Glen Cenizal, Augusto Antonio, Mandaluyong brothers and Al Hernando.

Among the American bets are Tom Cooper, Jeff Hadway, Wayne Speckels, Benny Jennings, Joe and Robin Walker, Allen Gambrel and Tom Wilson.

Part of the proceeds of the NCA-WCD goes to a scholarship fund for underprivileged college students.

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DID YOU KNOW

WHILE studying medicine at University of Santo Tomas, Jose Rizal helped found a secret organization called Compañerismo, which sought to inculcate patriotism among its members.

Cyril C. Broadbents, Inquirer Research

Grateful city says thanks for new start

Marikina residents pick up the pieces, move on after Ondoy

By DJ Yap

STILL REELING FROM THE DEVASTATION caused by Tropical Storm "Ondoy" three months ago, Marikina City residents gathered Sunday to give thanks to the lord above who helped them through a long and tragic year.

Together they prayed that the new year would bring them good tidings and that disaster shall not pass their way again.

Some 20,000 residents from three different faiths—Christian, Muslim and Buddhist—assembled at the Marikina Sports Park for a thanksgiving rally, the first such gathering since Ondoy brought the city to its knees in September, killing dozens of people and destroying billions worth of property and livelihood.

"We give thanks for the compassion we received this year. It is this compassion that can help us move on from this tragedy," Mayor Marides Fernando told the crowd. "May no disaster of this magnitude ever visit us again," she said.

The event was organized by the Tzu Chi Foundation, a Taiwan-based nongovernmental organization built on Buddhist teachings, in cooperation with the Marikina City government.

On Sunday, the organization led the Omamioh in attendance in lighting candles, offering prayers to God, Allah and Buddha.

Tzu Chi Executive Philippines chief executive officer Silverio Li led the Buddhist prayer "to purify the minds of the people, to harmonize society and thus there be no disaster happen not only in Marikina and the Philippines but throughout the universe."

The organizers said that at the height of Ondoy, Tzu Chi volunteers helped repair the city providing food and other forms of assistance to the victims, including a cash-for-work program, in which residents were paid P400 for every day of work cleaning up the streets of garbage and debris.

In all, the organization poured in some P60 million for relief and rehabilitation efforts, Li said.

The founder of Tzu Chi, Taiwan-based Master Cheng Yen, said in a video message that people must seek to live simple and frugal lives to achieve harmony with nature and so they may be spared from disasters.

"Only when people's minds are simple can the world be free of disaster, and we can live in peace," she said.

BOUNTIFUL YEAR
Oranges flood the stalls in most markets of Metro Manila at this time of the year. Buying "round fruits" for the home, like these oranges for sale at a Quezon City fruit stand, is believed to bring prosperity to the homeowner for the coming new year. RACHEL LOPEZ

Show sincerity in helping your son, police tell Ivler's mother

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MOTHER OF ROAD RAGE suspect Jason Ivler could be charged for misleading authorities if her statements on her son's whereabouts turn out to be false, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said yesterday.

Supt. Fernidel Mirandilla, chief of the NCRPO's public information office, said Marlene Aguilar-Pollard could be lying about an e-mail allegedly sent to her from Ivler saying he was already in Hawaii.

'As if it were the truth'

"If she abused that information as if it were the truth, we could construe it as an effort to mislead authorities on Ivler's whereabouts, and she could be held liable if this turns out to be untrue," he told Inquirer.

Aguilar could be charged with violations of Presidential Decree 1829 that penalizes obstructions made in the apprehension and prosecution of criminal offenders.

A warrant of arrest has been issued against Ivler, who is believed to have killed Renato Victor Eborle Jr. during a traffic altercation on Nov. 18.

The 27-year-old Eborle is the son of Presidential Chief of Staff Undersecretary Renato Eborle Sr.

E-mail

In an earlier interview with Inquirer, Aguilar claimed that others from the purported e-mail, her son did not contact them since he escaped a day after the killing. She also gave no other details on the e-mail.

But Mirandilla said that instead of speaking to the media, Aguilar should cooperate with the police in their investigation to show her sincerity.

"She could coordinate with us, especially if she fears her son is in danger. If she has real concern and is being honest, she will help the police to have him arrested peacefully," he stressed.

The NCRPO official said Aguilar's cooperation with authorities was "abysmal."

The NCRPO believes Ivler is still in the country. "There's no documentary from the Bureau of Immigration that he has left for abroad," said Mirandilla.

The police officer admitted the possibility that Ivler could have escaped, as he attempted to do so after being involved in the death of a Malacañang official, Hector Ponce, in 2004.

Trained soldier

Ivler, a "highly-trained soldier" according to his mother, was about to sail for Malaysia when he was caught by National Bureau of Investigation agents.

"He's an American citizen. He would be very visible, unless he is assisted by powerful people," Mirandilla said.

The car used by the man who shot Eborle was found in Ivler's stepfather Stephen Pollard, an Alaio Development Bank economist.

Back to 3 lanes by Jan. at Skyway's Bicutan-Alabang at-grade section

SKYWAY DEVELOPER CITRA Metro Manila Tollways Corp. (CMMTC) announced that the Skyway System's at-grade Sucat-Alabang stretch will be restored to three lanes when its main contractor for the South Metro Manila Skyway Stage 2 Project resumes full-time construction work on Jan. 2.

The three lanes, marked by a yellow road line from Alabang to Sucat, is a result of column works from Sucat to Alabang, with only three columns left for completion.

This has resulted in the adjustments of the concrete barriers along the Skyway Stage 2 work site toward to free up space for the use of motorists.

The construction of the three-lane configuration is also expected to ease the traffic situation along the toll way.

The CMMTC and its main contractor have been accelerating the construction pace of Skyway Stage 2 project even as they continue to face challenges in managing traffic and working on a very limited space.

The first milestone of the Skyway Stage 2 Project is four months ahead of the target schedule in May next year.

Earlier, the CMMTC made a commitment to put up all the columns and restore the toll road to three lanes by May 2010.

The CMMTC said it was optimistic that the project would stay ahead of its target schedule, despite temporary work disruptions during the holidays...specifically on Dec. 24, 25, 26, and 31, 2009 and on Jan. 1, 2010...to give way to the Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

To date, construction is three percent ahead of schedule.

TREE NURSERY LAUNCH
The launching of a tree nursery at Sitio Boso-Boso in Antipolo City kicks off the Marikina watershed rehabilitation project. At the launching were (from right) Antipolo City Mayor Nilo Leyba, former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun, Philippine Disaster Recovery Foundation executive director and PLDT-SMART Foundation president Rom Mislo, PLDT and SMART Public Affairs head Ramon Isberto, UCPB-Gen Foundation Program head Maurice Chan and DENR-Forest Management Bureau director Marlo Mendoza.

No New Year's eve countdown for Makati revelers, says mayor

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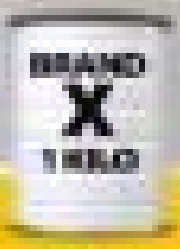

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

At least 15 killed in Tehran clashes

TEHRAN—MORE THAN 15 PEOPLE WERE KILLED in riots which rocked Tehran during massive anti-government rallies, state television said Monday, as a Web site reported a key opposition figure arrested.

State television said 10 of those killed during Sunday's three clashes in the Iranian capital were members of "anti-revolutionary terrorist" groups, apparently referring to opposition supporters.

The other five who died were killed by "terrorist groups" in "suspicious acts," the report said, without elaborating.

Iranian reformist Web sites said Sunday that security forces killed a nephew of opposition leader Mir Hussein Mousavi while police confirmed that five people had died in **what caused into the bloodiest** showdowns between protesters and security forces in months.

The opposition said that those who died were killed when security forces opened fire after firing was put into using batons against protesters in central Tehran.

The crackdown followed stern warnings by the authorities that they would crush attempts to use processions linked to Sunday's commemorations for Ashura, the holiest day in Shiite Islam's holiest day, as a launch pad for protests.

Opponents of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's June 12 re-election, which they say was massively rigged, have used a series of government-backed public events to muster protests, many of which have ended in clashes with police.

In a further crackdown on the opposition, Ebrahim Yazdi, who served as foreign minister at the **start of the** 1979 Islamic revolution, was arrested in his home early Monday the Rahesabz website reported.

Yazdi, secretary general of the outlawed but tolerated Iran Freedom Movement, "was arrested at home and taken to an unknown place early Monday morning by security agents," the Web site said.

"He was summoned to a certain prosecutor linked to Sunday's unconstitutional behavior. He didn't follow this up as a hostile tactic," it added, without elaborating.

Opposition supporters were **reasonable on** Monday preparing for the funerals of those killed, among them Seyed Ali Mousavi, the 35-year-old nephew of Mousavi, who according to reformist Web site Parlemannews was shot in his heart during the clashes.

Hundreds have in the past sparked further anti-government protests.

Witness police had on Sunday reported five people "suspiciously killed."

"Specialists are trying to identify **the suspect perpetrators of this incident**," said a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency.

Witnesses reported more 300 people, deputy police chief Ahmad Reza Radan told state television.

The last known double during street protests by Tehran were on June 20. The opposition says that at least 72 people were killed in those protests. AFP

MOURNERS mourners circle around a tent which is set on fire in a ceremony commemorating Shiites' holy day of Ashoura, in Tehran, Iran, on Dec. 27, marking the death of Imam Hussein, a grandson of Islam's prophet Mohammad, who was killed in a battle in Karbala in Iraq. —

Bomb suspect came from elite family, best schools

ABDULMUTALLAB —

LAGOS, NIGERIA—AS A MEMBER OF A prominent and wealthy Nigerian family, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab received the best schooling, from the elite British International School in West Africa to the venerated University College London.

But the education he wanted was of a different sort: Nigerian officials say his interest in extremist Islam prompted his father to warn US authorities. An Abdulmutallab was being escorted in handcuffs off the Detroit-bound airliner he attempted to blow up on Christmas Day, he told US officials that he had sought to re-create the violence in an Islamist hotbed in Yemen.

A portrait emerged Sunday of a serious young man who had a privileged life in the care of a prominent family, but became estranged from his family as zealotry. Devoutly religious, he was nicknamed "The Pope" for his untidy ways and gave few clues in his youth that he would turn radical, friends and family said.

"In all the time I taught him, we never had **error words**," said Mikhael Shimuye, a Briton who taught history at the British International School in Lome, Togo. "Somewhere along the line, he must have met some sort of fanatics, and they must have turned his mind."

Abdulmutallab, 23, has been charged with trying to destroy a Northwest flight on Christmas Day with 279 passengers and 11 crew members on board. The detonator on his explosive apparently malfunctioned and he was subdued by other passengers.

Through an official, Abdulmutallab's father "expressed deep shock and regret over his son's actions."

His family home sits in the northern city of Nassau, in the heart of Nigeria's Islamic-influenced Muslim region. Some of the country's most powerful figures have come from the family's ilk: Alhaji Umar Shitabi, who had a successful career in commercial banking, also joined the board of an Islamic bank—one that avoids the kinds of finance practices banned by the Quran.

The large house, surrounded by a wall and a central fence just off the main road running through the city, stood empty, a common occurrence for a family that sought an education abroad for Abdulmutallab's friends and relatives. The Associated Press they could not comment but expected the family to return at retirement.

Abdulla was working with the FBI and not expected to grant media interviews, Information Minister Dora Akunyili said.

The elder Mutallab says "is responsible and respected Nigerian, with a true Nigerian spirit," she said. He had been estranged from his son for several months and alerted officials at the US Embassy last month about the youth's growing hard line Islamic religious beliefs.

A close neighbor told the AP he believed Abdulmutallab did not get his extremist ideas from his family or from within Nigeria.

Bayero Sark Haruna, 55, said Abdulmutallab was "very religious" and "very obedient" to his parents in a way in the well-to-do banking family.

"I believe he must have been lured when he is schooling to carry out this attack," Haruna said. AP

US has set up a covert front on Qaida in Yemen

WASHINGTON—IN THE WAKE of two unfinished major wars, the United States has quietly opened a third, largely covert front against al-Qaida in Yemen.

A year ago, the CIA sent scores of its top field operatives with counterinsurgency experience to the country, according a former top agency official. At the same time, scores of the most secret Special Operations commandos have begun training Yemeni security forces in counterterrorism tactics, senior military officers said.

The Pentagon is spending more than $70 million over the next 18 months, and using teams of Special Forces, to train and equip Yemeni military Interior Ministry and coastguard forces, more than doubling previous military aid levels.

At American intelligence agencies sought to exploit the failure of a 23-year-old Nigerian man that Qaida leaders in Yemen had trained and equipped him to blow up a Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines jet on Christmas Day, the plot casts a spotlight on the Obama administration's complicated relationship with Yemen.

The White House is seeking to nurture enduring ties with the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and pried him to combat the local Qaida affiliate, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, even as the impoverished country grapples with seemingly intractable internal turmoil.

With fears also growing of a resurgent Islamist extremism in poorly bounded east Asia, administration officials and American lawmakers said Yemen would become al-Qaida's next operational and training hub, evading the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan where the organization's top leaders operate.

"Yemen now becomes one of the centers of that fight," said Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, I-Conn., chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, who visited the country in August. "We have a growing presence there, and we have U.S. of Special Operations, Green Berets, intelligence," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

Yemen's security problems won't just stay in Yemen," said Christopher Boucek, who studies Yemen as an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "They're regional problems, and they affect Western interests."

Yemen escalated its campaign against al-Qaida with major airstrikes on Dec. 17 and late Thursday that killed more than 60 militants.

American officials said that they have provided intelligence and "firepower" for the effort. AFP

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In the flourishing generic drug market, Winthrop is a generic medicine manufacturer with a difference.

South Korea to build reactors in the UAE

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES said Sunday that it had chosen a South Korean-led consortium for a $20 billion contract to create the first nuclear power reactors in the Middle East.

The Korean consortium beat out a General Electric-Hitachi team and a French consortium that included Bloomsin de France and Areva.

The deal, one of the largest in the energy sector this year, comes amid a resurgence of nuclear power projects and fuel involved parameters following fears officials including the president Nicolas Sarkozy of France and Lee Myung-bak of South Korea.

The deal went forward after the countries signed an agreement with Washington on Dec. 17 to alleviate proliferation concerns. The Arab country, a federation of seven Persian Gulf principalities, agreed to this protocol that it would not create uranium or reprocess spent fuel.

After a decade of strong growth, the emirates, a leading oil producer, is seeking to modernize its economy and diversify its energy sources. It imports most of the natural gas that it burns to generate electricity and using its vast oil wealth reduce emissions available for export.

Under the deal announced in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, Korea Electric Power will lead a group that includes Samsung Corp., the American subsidiary of Toshiba, in designing, building and helping to operate four 1,400-megawatt nuclear power plants for the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corp. The first of the third-generation units is planned to be online in 2017, with the others providing electricity to the grid by 2020.

The deal could be worth as much as $40 billion if the initial four plants are successful said the arrangement is extended.

"The nature of this project will require a partnership that endures for nearly 100 years," Shaikhan al-Mubarak, chairman of the corporation, said in a statement announcing the winning bid.

Emirates officials said they were still discussing cooperation with the other bidders to assist the long-term fuel supply, investments and training.

The Korean group also includes Doosan Heavy Industries and Construction, Hyundai Engineering and Construction, and Samsung. GEC Korea Electric Power, owned by the South Korean government, operates 20 nuclear plants, generating about 40 percent of the country's electricity. The contract is its first big export deal. AFP

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez
BUSINESS

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East Asia to launch $120-B crisis fund

Asean +3 to set up safety net to shield it from crisis

SEOUL—FOURTEEN EAST AND SOUTHEAST Asian economies said on Monday that they have signed a plan to set up a $120-billion emergency fund known as the Chiang Mai Initiative, Asia's first move to devise a safety net to shield itself from a financial crisis.

Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will be needed to swap their local currencies into US dollars for up to a pre-set amount by each party, they said in a joint statement.

"The core objectives of the CMIM are to address balance of payment and short-term liquidity difficulties in the region and to supplement the existing international financial arrangements," the statement said, referring to the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), the official name of a deal.

South Korea said the initiative would take effect in March 2010, adding further negotiations were needed on a proposed surveillance unit, which would play the role of a control station.

The central number is expected to be cut up with the help of some Development Bank and the Asean secretariat.

The Asean Plus Three first agreed in May to set up the fund by transforming a network of mostly bilateral currency swap arrangements among member economies, valued at $76 billion, into a single $120-billion pool committed by the members.

Reuters provided details of the plan based on a joint statement from the member economies.

The scheme is an upgrade of the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), launched after an agreement in the Thai town of Chiang Mai in 2000 among finance ministers of the member countries to help avoid a repeat of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, said the news agency.

Decision-making on lending issues will be made by majority of votes from the members. Changes to fundamental issues, such as membership and lending terms, will require consensus among all members.

The following is a list of how much each member has committed, and the amount they are entitled to draw, from the fund (in billion US dollars):

- The Philippines commits 3.68, and is entitled to withdraw 9.2;
- Japan and China (tied for with Hong Kong) each commit 38.4 each, and are entitled to withdraw 19.2 each;
- South Korea commits 19.2, entitled to withdraw 19.2;
- Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore commit 4.77 each, entitled to withdraw 11.925 each; and,
- Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam commit 1.24 combined, entitled to withdraw 6.2 each. — Reuters

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(January 2008 to November 2009, in percent)
CURRENCIES
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
STOCK MARKET
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Cebu power project seen getting $120-M ADB loan

By Michelle V. Rozas

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK IS expected to extend a $120-million loan to the Philippines for the construction of a power plant in Cebu, which is aimed at preventing a power crisis in the Visayas.

Unlike other loans from the ADB, the assistance for the "Visayas Base Load Power Development Project" will be extended to a private company—Kepco SPC Power Corp.—without government guarantees.

The power project was initiated in November 2005 when the government bid out a 20-year lease contract under which the winning bidder will have to operate and maintain a power plant with a capacity of at least 200 megawatts within the Naga Power Plant complex in Cebu province.

Kepco won the contract and it was supposedly scheduled to commercialize the first unit of the plant in December 2008 and the second unit in June 2009. Power implementation was, however, delayed due to certain problems, particularly the difficulties encountered by the winning bidder to Naga power supply contracts with local distribution utilities.

Project proponents, however, said they were now ready to implement the project.

ADB president Haruhiko Kuroda has recommended the financing of the project to the ADB board. In a memorandum he later circulated to the project documents, Kuroda said the proposed $120-million loan was consistent with the development objectives of the ADB.

"The project will provide much needed electricity to an economically promising area in the Philippines with a current power shortage, and will thereby support the country's continued growth and contribute to reduced poverty in the region," Kuroda said in the paper.

The ADB chief said Tokyo has pledged to contribute close to $6 billion to the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) to help developing countries finance projects that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The CTF is one of two funds established by the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), which also includes the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF). The CIF is a multilateral trust fund that provides financing to developing countries to help them mitigate the impact of climate change.

'09 mining investments fall short of target

By Rica T. Chikiamco

MINING INVESTMENTS IN THE Philippines reached $375 million—just a little more than half of the $686 million target for 2009, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

"These were delays in projects; some because the principals were hit by recession," said Bureau chief Horacio Ramos. "So the target was not achieved."

Still, this year's figure brought in $1.5 billion the country's total mining-related investments in the country since 2004, when the Supreme Court allowed complete foreign ownership of mining ventures.

When the government set its investment target of $690 million for the year, it expected demand to be driven up by China, which was ramping up infrastructure projects in preparation for a global economic rebound.

Despite this year's huge shortfall, more investments may come in next year, when miners are expected to have improved access to financing as new industrial mineral exports start operations, Ramos said.

One of the biggest investors of the year was Intex, which undertook a $1.5-billion nickel project in Surigao del Norte province.

BIR to undertake nationwide reshuffle of district officers

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE will reshuffle members of its staff in district offices across the country to improve collections in 2010 as the government continues its deficit spending.

Revenue Commissioner Jose C. Tan Torres said in an interview that the agency would undertake broad transfer of revenue district officers and assistant RDOs this month.

Tan Torres said a first batch of 37 revenue officers, mostly assigned in Metro Manila, were "relieved of their present duties and directed to report to their new assignments."

He said officials of the same rank will be the same docket would be transferred to a new geographic area of responsibility.

"There is another batch numbering more than 50 that will be moved," Tan Torres said. "This will include officers outside Metro Manila."

Also, RDOs have been designated to "move people around," affecting the rank of Revenue Officers 3 and below, Tan Torres said.

The bureau chief added that the BIR hoped to address shortfalls in collection targets starting in January after a year of warnings that were decidedly lower than target and actual yields of the previous years.

Finance officials reported last week that government earnings from January to November totaled P1.02 trillion, or 5.5 percent lower than earnings in the same period last year.

Of the total, the BIR accounted for P714.1 billion, also 5.8 percent lower than collections in 2008.

Tan Torres said there was a consensus among economic managers to reduce the BIR target for 2010, from P875 billion to between P800 billion and P850 billion.

A quiet week of trading

THERE LAST FEW DAYS ENDING the year and the Christmas season, trading has been light and slow as anticipated.

Trading volume and value have been about 50 percent lesser than the usual PSE bottom plus to turnover that has created market illusion during the year, and which unfortunately have carried up the main market index to where it is now.

Never it was for the relative lumpiness of stock prices that a perceptibly felt not universally caused by end-of-the-year window dressing efforts, the market's facilitators anxiety could be mistaken for the makings of an impending market reversal.

MARKET RIDER

Dero Somera

Market review

As it is, the market is trading on diminished volume and value, with transactions remaining within a narrow price band confined within 70 points above the 3,000 psychological level of the Philippine Stock Exchange index.

As a result, market momentum has remained weak with prices appearing to be in "overbought" level.

Shifted in the process are several market trends that should be unfolding in several first and second line stocks. For instance, the share price of Globe Telecom Inc. (GLO) has been on the up move from P980 to P980 just before last week. The price run-up was cut short and stalled leaving the price of GLO shares to trade at P920 or lower in the past few days.

The action is observed to have happened with Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (TEL), Ayala Corp. (AC), Alliance Global Group Inc., Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC), Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Banco de Oro Unibank Inc., Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. (MBT), SM Investments Corp. (SM), and Megaworld Corp. (MEG) and Energy Development Corp. (EDC).

The situation has also given rise to profit-taking that resulted in previously unheard share price drops in select stocks.

For instance, First Gen Corp. (FGEN) suffered this last because of its just concluded stock rights issue. Investors unloaded their FGEN shares to take advantage of the price differential.

Based on its closing price of P16.75, the adjusted price of FGEN after the rights issue was P10.98.

This meant a price differential of P5.35 or a spread equivalent to some 32.0 percent. This has made FGEN a lucrative target for profit taking and sell off.

Buttons low spin

In summary, the current market weakness is not the result of a dwindling market. It is not also the result of a deliberate migration of money to some other less performance arena.

This is but the result of occasional occurrence that arises at this time of the year owing to the absence of market makers who are usually out for the holidays.

Supporting this view cautiously is the apparent buoyancy of stock prices while volume and turnover value stand small.

And while stock prices seem overbought or unable to go up any higher than at current levels, they have remained steady and do not appear to surpass any upstanding to a reversal or change in trend direction.

On a fundamental note, world markets are moving higher albeit cautious. Their performance provides credence to the continuing economic recovery happening in global markets, especially the United States.

If you will also remember, the market closed more or less at the 1,700 level of the PSEi when it started one study this year. In the current index level of about 3,070, the market has gone up by as much 71 percent already.

Therefore, any lingering movement of stock prices at current or even as slightly lower levels should be considered a healthy act of market consolidation.

A price climb equivalent to 71.0 percent is no small climb in any type and form of market condition. Such rate of price advance necessarily needs some type of market breather or consolidation that would allow fresh funds to replace old funds that would bring the trading play of stocks to the next level.

In short, there is nothing wrong or something to worry about in the current market slowdown. We are just observing a quiet month of trading.

"Happy New Year!" and a joint trader point ahead to all of us.

(You may reach the Market Rider at *marketrider@inquirer.com.ph* or *dlrsoy@documentsnet@yahoo.com.*)

Filinvest buys out partner

IBM wins Asian CSR Award for "World Community Grid: Nutritious Rice Project"

IBM was awarded the Asian CSR Award for Poverty Alleviation for its program, "World Community Grid: Nutritious Rice for the World" during the 8th Asian Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Awards held on November 26 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The program uses software written by researchers at the Computational Biology Research Group at the University of Washington to predict the protein structures of major rice strains in view of the global hunger crisis remark.

Determining the structure of proteins is an extremely complex and expensive process. The World Community Grid - Nutritious Rice for the World project will help create the largest and most comprehensive map of rice proteins and their related functions thus enabling agriculturists and farmers pinpoint which plants should be selected for cross-breeding to cultivate better crops. The ultimate objective is to help farmers breed better rice strains to obtain higher crop yields, promote greater disease and pest resistance and provide a full range of available nutrients that can benefit people around the world, especially in regions where hunger and nutritional deficiencies are critical concerns.

This is one of the first steps in an extensive research effort to breed new strains of rice. If the techniques being employed for this project prove fruitful, they could be applied to other important crops, avoiding the controversial approach of genetically engineering plants.

The Philippine-based International Rice Research Institute has contributed over 15th years of runtime to World Community Grid.

James Velasquez, Country General Manager of IBM Philippines, accepting the award for IBM, said: "We live in a time where we can leverage smarter technologies developed through applied research to solve critical issues facing society. This was the guiding principle that led us to embark on this journey with our partners for the World Community Grid project: Nutritious Rice for the World."

For two years running, World Community Grid has enabled scientists around the world access to extraordinary computational power, dramatically accelerating the pace of research from years to months. This grid is powered by the cumulative donation of idle time from PCs all over the world, he added. Employees of IBM in the Philippines are contributing to the grid.

World Community Grid now has 488,000 members, 1.4-million devices and over 282,000 years of runtime.

The Asian CSR Awards, co-presented by Asian Institute of Management and Intal, is Asia's premier Awards program that recognizes companies in Asia for their social projects and programs. The five major categories for 2004 were: Best Workplace Practices, Concern for Health, Environmental Excellence, Poverty Alleviation, and Support and Improvement of Education.

Full control of two property units

By Dante L. Lozo

ASIA SPIRIT DEVELOPER FILINVEST LAND Inc. will reacquire the equity stakes of a foreign partner in two of its property units as part of its effort to consolidate its holdings.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Filinvest said its board had approved the acquisition of the 40 percent interest of Africa-Israel Properties (Phils.) Inc. in Cybertower Properties Inc.

It also approved the acquisition of the 40 percent interest of Africa-Israel Investments (Phils.) Inc. in Filinvest Africa-Israel Properties Inc. (Fiap).

According to Filinvest, it will buy the Cybertower stake at P760 million, while the Fiap interest will be bought for P460.2 million, or a total of P1.1420 billion.

"The sale is subject to the final agreement on the terms and conditions by the parties and conditioned, among others, on (Africa-Israel's) delivery to (Filinvest) of required documents for closing," it said.

Filinvest presently owns 60 percent of Cybertower and Fiap, both units will become wholly owned by the Gotianun-controlled property firm once the deals consummated.

The approved acquisition price for the Fiap was computed at company's book value per share, while the Cybertower price was computed at a premium of 0.79 percent over its book value as of Sept. 30, 2004.

"The sale by Africa-Israel of its interests in the two companies is part of the group's global portfolio rebalancing and consolidation activity," Filinvest said.

The Africa-Israel group invests internationally in equities, fixed income, foreign exchange, commodities, alternative investments, real estate and private equity.

Cebu . . .

From page B1

Philippines' overall economic growth because of its resources. However, the inadequate power crisis in the region is threatening its investment climate.

"Synonymous blackouts now take place on Cebu, Negros and Negros islands and are supposed to become more frequent until a new generation (plant) is brought on-line," Natividad said.

He said the project would partly address the achievement of the Philippine government's roadmap for the energy sector until 2014.

'09 mining . . .

From page B1

took a $74-million feasibility study.

Among the projects held back by recession was that of Cove Gold Corp., which needed to raise at least $1.2 million for its Rhino mine in gold-rich Compostela Valley in Mindanao.

Investment in the industry fell from about $300 million in 2007 to $650 million in 2008 as the global financial crisis made it hard for miners to access funds.

Geological studies indicate that up to 7.1 billion tons of metals may be extracted from the country's mineral sites.

Breaktime

From page B6

sustenance ranks far more tax collection. Much, much more! ...

SEN. Loren Legarda is not happy with the budget deficit. She is her son-s fiscal crisis next year.

Of course, the credit rating firm Moody's Investors Service also reported that 2010 may be a "tumultuous year" for borrowing countries like the Philippines.

Legarda thus fears that the Philippines, among other things, might have to pay for higher interest rates on its debt, which could only worsen the budget deficit.

Accordingly, in a report by Moody's, the budget deficit of the Philippines may hit P300 billion this year and P350 billion next year.

That means that we have to borrow tons of money abroad to cover for such a yawning budgetary gap.

Here per Legarda's inner words: "Because of the fiscal irresponsibility, overspending, corruption and overborrowing of the administration, the government may find it extremely difficult next year to acquire loans to finance even authorized level needs."

Believe me, not just a few in business share such a fear.

Shares ...

From page B1

Volume amounted to 692.6 million shares worth P2.08 billion ($44.8 million).

Top-traded Chinabank Corp. was down 2.67 percent to P102 while BH Investment Corp. gained 0.77 percent to P325.

Energy Development Corp. was up 2.18 percent to P9.70, while Century Peak Metal Holdings rose 1.56 percent to P6.50.

AFP

Gov't debt payment hit P18.3B in Oct.

By Bussiel W. Dalridge

THE GOVERNMENT spent P18.3 billion in October to pay its debts. This was 17.8 percent lower than the P22.3 billion paid in the same month last year, according to the Bureau of the Treasury.

The decline came in the same month that the government availed itself of a P530-billion package from the Asian Development Bank for reform efforts related to governance and the justice system.

Also in November, the government issued P21.047 billion worth of 20-year treasury bonds amid a strong demand from pension funds and insurance firms.

Even then, BTr data show that in the 11 months to October, total payment was almost the same as the year-ago level at P300 billion.

In November alone, P1.073 billion was spent on interest payments, a decrease of 12.3 percent from P12.24 billion a year ago.

Also, P7.6 billion in principal loan was paid, falling by 24.5 percent from P10.06 billion in same month of 2008.

Interest and principal payments made to domestic lenders dropped by 18 percent to P12.74 billion from P15.53 billion.

Payments made to foreign creditors went down by 17.3 percent to P5.09 billion from P6.79 billion.

In the 11 months to November, P200.15 billion was spent on interest payments, 3.7 percent less than the P204.10 billion a year ago.

A total of P322.91 billion in principal got was paid, increasing by 1.5 percent from P326.14 billion last year.

Interest and principal payments made to domestic lenders declined by 8.8 percent to P190.58 billion from P418.29 billion.

Payments made to foreign creditors increased by 36.2 percent to P132.47 billion from P 74.2 billion.

For 2009, the government's programmed payment for financial obligations is P498.5 billion or 6.7 percent higher than the actual payment of P 15.7 billion last year.

Being the leading manufacturer of home furniture in the Philippines, Salem Investor Industries Corporation, more popularly known as SALEM this year again upheld its commitment to its customers to provide the highest quality products and excellent service. As a testament to this undertaking, certification international Philippines has upgraded SALEM the SIIC's ISO certification from ISO 9001:2000 to ISO 9001:2008. Shown above holding the certification ISO 9001:2008 certification are the Management officers Mr. Florentino C. Dela Cruz Jr., Plant Manager; (L) and Mr. Roberto E. Dancel Jr., Executive Assistant to the President (R). Also shown are the Company's ISO 9001:2008 steering committee officers namely, from (to R) Ms. Carolyn T. Lee, Admin Officer; Ms. Jinky D. Gellor, Secretary; Officer; Mr. Rhodelson N. Bautista, Assistant QMR; Ms. Corazon P. Palacios, Secretary Officer; Mr. Raymond C. Lazo, Area III Production Supervisor; Ms. Emily L. Pascual, Legal Officer; Mr. Oliver Bales Santos, Accounting Manager; Mr. Florentino L. Dela Cruz Jr., Plant Manager; Mr. Gerardo P. Clemente, Comptroller; Mr. Jack B. Sulio, Logistics Manager; Mr. Roberto C. Dancel Jr., Executive Assistant to the President; Mr. Dennis M. Concepcion, C & C Officer; Mr. Edgar H. Hallari, Production Manager; Mr. Raymundo B. Canseta, Quality Management Representative; Mr. Bryan John G. Francisco, QCC; Mr. Ramon P. Andalucha, Dep. Plant Mngr. Workman

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BUSINESS

Oh my gas!

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bassid III

IS IT TRUE THAT THE BG GROUP (formerly British Gas) plans to sell its holdings in the Lopez family's First Gas Holdings Corp. (FGHC)?

Rumors surrounding the apparent divestment in the Philippines by the world's leader in the natural gas business are flying all over town.

BG Group, which has operations in some 27 countries, is the kind of foreign investor that an investment-hungry country like ours should want to keep.

The group only imported assets—as of end 2006—amounting to about $40 billion. Its annual investment amounts to about $24 billion.

In other words, BG Group's annual income is equivalent to the entire yearly budget of the Republic of the Philippines.

And so why does such a valuable investor as the BG Group want to get out of the Philippines?

FROM what I gathered, BG Group is making good money from its investments in the two gas-fired power plants in Batangas.

These are the Sta. Rita and the San Lorenzo plants, which have a combined capacity of 1,000 megawatts, built more than 10 years ago.

The direct owner of these plants is First Gas Power Corp., a subsidiary of FGHC under the Lopez family.

FGHC, in turn, is the joint venture company, the one controlled by the Lopez family's First Philippine Holdings Corp. with 51 percent.

BG Group owns 40 percent of FGHC, while the Member Pension Fund has the remaining 9 percent.

I hear that these power plants are quite profitable, accounting for more than 12 percent of the generation capacity in Luzon, serving the electronic needs of Metro Manila.

They also enjoy a so-called BPA (power purchase agreement) with the country's dominant electricity distributor, none other than Meralco, which is effective until 2025.

Also, the Batangas plants are the natural gas crossing from the Camago-Malampaya offshore gas field in Palawan.

What I am saying is that these plants are not about to close down due to lack of demand, perhaps, or lack of gas supply. Look, they even have a contract to supply Meralco's needs.

Why, we really then will BG Group want to get out of a business like that?

IF SO happens that this country needs more investments in the power generation business—in the billions of dollars, at that!

There is a source power shortage in the Visayas, for one. And so the substantial source excesses in Luzon, or local supply to also jurisdictional within a year.

Instead of getting more foreign investments to the power business in this country, a reputable world leading investor like the BG Group is said to be getting out. Oh, no!

LUCKILY for us, the big boys in business are going into the power business. You know—the likes of San Miguel, First Pacific and the Metrobank Group.

Now, this company called Global Business Power Corp. (GBPC), under the Metrobank Group, is investing heavily in the Visayas.

It is building large power plants in Cebu and in Iloilo, investing almost a billion dollars in the plants.

In fact, the Bureau of Customs in Cebu gave GBPC an award as the "Top Import Player" with its P 16 million import tax payment so far this year.

But the biggest award goes to the subsidiary of GBPC, called Cebu Energy Development Corp., which is building three circulating fluidized bed coal-fired 246-megawatt plants in Cebu.

Cebu Energy contributed some P225.91 million in import tax payments to the BOC in Cebu.

What I am saying is that, really, driven in

BREAKTIME B2

Gary V. Highlights Globe Business' Motown Night

Mr. Pure Energy Gary V electrifies the audience with his performance.

Globe Business Corporate and SME Segments Head, Manny Alejada with Dutch Comejo of Boracay.

American soul-pop singer Billy Crawford delights the crowd with his performance.

Yvonne Ting, CEO of Talk N Save with Arlene Malazan and Manny Alejada

It was a grand night of fun and celebration as Globe Business held appreciation parties for its customers belonging to the Corporate, Small and Medium Enterprise segments.

It is a way to show its appreciation for choosing Globe as their trusted partner in business. With the theme "Globe Business Refines Motown", the event was also a celebration of the ambition, hard work and dedication of businessmen and entrepreneurs. The affair was held last December 12 at the Manila Hotel Cebu City and December 13 at the Mandaluyong Shangri-la Hotel, Makati City.

Motown was the perfect theme for the night's festivities as the legendary record company produced some of the best musical artists in the world. Just as Motown inspired music legends, Globe Business wants to inspire businesses to become successful. Its goal is to provide technology and solutions to make businesses more competitive.

Globe Business Head Gil Genio and Corporate & SME Segments Head Manny Alejada led Globe in welcoming the guests to the event. The Metro Manila appreciation night was highlighted with performances by Mr. Pure Energy Gary Valenciano and singer-songwriter-actress Jessa Zaragoza while Bituin Escalante and Billy Crawford entertained the guests at the Cebu appreciation night.

According to Globe President and CEO Ernest Cu, the affair was a chance for Globe to recognize and value its loyal customers. "Globe Business wants to keep its customers its topmost priority. This appreciation night is a celebration of the hardworking business leaders of the country, a chance to let them spend some quality time away from work," Cu said.

"This is our way of thanking our subscribers for patronizing our products and services that continuously aim to help their business grow," Alejada said.

Globe Business' Manny Alejada (far left) and Remi Palabrica (5th from left), Nokia's Jill Lorbis (2nd from left) and their pals Benito with clarinet, Rianne inspired actors-emcees.

Corporate Sales Head Aimee Maldivas, Silverago Back Office's Stuart Waters and Globe President & CEO Ernest Cu

Jessica Desalesta with Andreas Stadiotas, GM of Singapore Airlines

Rissie Escalante's powerful voice is reminiscent of legendary Motown artist Diana Ross

Globe Business' Win Espina (far left), Jolianne Guevarra, Jason Tan (2nd from left) and Cebu Junior Senate (far right) with MPI members Richard Sans of Food Asia Corp., Teresita Ngan Tan of Icon A Pizza and Susie Ting of V-Cargo.

Jovel Ong of Tourena Corp. Phils. with Manny Alejada

Jojo Alejo with Phil. Tennis, winner of Agora Marina

Globe Business' Vanessa Quiza (left) and Win Espina (right) with Christian Bowman, Chief Regional Officer of Pinoypares RHQ Manila.

LIFESTYLE Wellness
Editor: Thelma Sioson San Juan

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What are the healthy eating trends in 2010?

By Mitch Felipe-Mendoza
Contributor

EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF health and wellness continue to battle global obesity by discovering healthier food alternatives and educating people on how to live and eat healthily. At the same time, more people are engaging in exercise, sports and proper diet.

Many new diet and health books focus on a more holistic approach to weight loss. They recommend eating balanced meals, engaging in regular physical activity and combining behavior modification and cognitive restructuring strategies for sustainable weight maintenance.

The following are healthy eating trends which were brought about by recent calamities and global economic difficulties.

Rise of complex carbohydrates

Since many people are now into training, fashionistas and triathletes, they also have the best eating plan to improve their physical and mental performance. Soon, they will understand the role of carbohydrates in having a fit body and may never been treated as low-carb and high-protein diets.

Terms like 'carbo-loading' will become a byword. And many will be interested in cooking healthy and tasty complex carbohydrate meals like pasta or rice dishes.

Drinking water

The easiest way to save money and calories is to drink water instead of flavored drinks or sodas.

Flavored water drinks are becoming popular, but just think about its cost as compared to plain drinking water.

Save as much as 400 calories equivalent to one hour of cardio exercise during the day by drinking three glasses of water instead of three glasses of iced tea.

Healthy meals

Most office workers don't have time to prepare healthy meals so they just buy at fast food restaurants.

If you think about it, on average employees can spend almost P5000–P7000 per day while packing an extra few calories compared to preparing healthy meals like brown rice with grilled fish or roasted chicken on wheat bread.

Food companies and chefs should offer affordable healthy meals to help their clients save time, money and calories. An example of such meals are eggs at the South Beach Diet.

WHOLE WHEAT pasta

FASTFOOD meal

But upcoming trends will focus more on nutritious meals and natural foods.

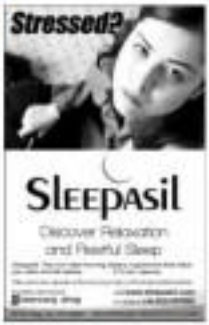
Food campaign

More restaurants will add healthy and affordable food choices like low-calorie soups to their menus. Aside from quality control, food portions will be given more attention. Nutrition facts will be released by restaurants and fast foods to educate consumers on how much calories they are taking in.

There will be more low-fat fast food choices such as salads and superior-nutrition like yogurts, baked treats low in fat and sugar and fruit-based snacks. More people will find ways to eat more natural but tasty foods filled with vitamins, minerals and nutrients.

More natural but tasty foods filled with vitamins, minerals and nutrients will be available next year

E-mail the author at mdz4life@gmail.com



GARFIELD

A. LAPAK BY JOEL ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOINSHOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGCO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABUALAN

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULOOB BY HANS COLI

BEH BY DAVID SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEBBY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

BIBO MACHINE BY HANS ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

3								6
	5		2	8		3	9	
	7	1				8		
			8		2		1	
	6						5	
	2		3		9			
		8				4	7	
	4	2		7	5		3	
9								2

Diversity Level: ★★

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8	1	6	3	9	4	2	7	5
3	4	2	8	5	7	9	1	6
1	3	4	5	7	9	6	8	2
5	2	7	6	3	8	4	9	1
6	9	8	4	1	2	7	5	3
9	6	3	2	8	1	5	4	7
4	7	1	9	6	5	3	2	8
2	8	5	7	4	3	1	6	9

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Body

• You are exactly what you eat...for every pound of low green food, an 10 vegetables, the more fit you put into your body.

• Keep it fresh and raw. Uncooked veg, cudoo and fruits are packed with life-giving enzymes. The more raw food you eat, the more energy you will have. Remember that raw food is your best defense against fibrotic diseases like cancer, hypertension and diabetes.

• Keep calories down by not drowning your salad with dressing. Try a simple mix of 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil, squeeze of lemon, 1 anchovy fillet for one tsp. Jogging did run through the blender, optional and sprinkle of herbs.

• Anti-aging simply means you can delay the aging process by avoiding toxic food with chemicals, preservatives, coloring or artificial seasoning. And one of the surest ways to become young looking and vibrant is to exercise.

• So stay on your exercise program. Slow but sure is better than quick and in-jure. Unless you're an athlete. Know that exercise produces free radicals. This is why you need to load up on antioxidant rich foods.

• Whatever you diet, one can never be too sure about the way food is prepared—overcooked/reheated, reused oils. Hygiene, kitchen preservation/sanitation, etc. So always remember your Vitamin A, B, C, E and minerals zinc, selenium, magnesium, selenium. These basics can help you to recuperate quicker.

• Sleep the sleep of angels, as they say. Nothing can replace a good night's sleep. And never forget that one night's sleep lost is difficult to make up for. You can literally age overnight. Practice the art of napping twice a day—it's rejuvenating.

• Make probiotics a part of your daily regimen. Two tablespoons of kefir daily is all you need to ensure great health.

Overeating, alcohol consumption, antibiotics and sedate food can cause hyperacidity and exacerbate food intolerance in the gut). Try kefir power from Bukidnon with 14 strains of good bacteria. Call World of

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Wellness at YOUR50, YOUMAG

Green blood is in. Taking wheatgrass or cynday will fortify one's body with iron, magnesium, calcium, fiber and enzymes. Its high alkaline benefits can normalize acidity instantly and restore balance to one's system. It is super food. Weight-conscious people should take one sachet of tea 20 minutes before meals to control appetite. Call 6981111, Easy Pharma.

Mind

The mind is so connected to the brain that most experts do not know where their boundaries belong. Is there an overlap?

• Stress free—If you can manage stress, then half of the main of your illnesses will disappear. Doctors believe stress is a major cause of disease. The mind is directly connected to the body. Therefore a stressed mind will deprive the immune system. Thus, if you can adopt a calm and positive attitude in life, chances are your health and strength are guaranteed. Stress management should be a major component of many health/wellness regimens. Take deep, long deliberate breaths to ease pressure on the mind and heart.

• Adopt a "tomorrow will be better" attitude. Investing this in your head is enough. If you want to magnify its power, read it out loud three times the good things come your way.

Spirit

There is no discounting the power of a prayerful heart. When the spirit moves you, it also moves mountains. Make time for meditative prayer everyday. If you can achieve harmony in all its aspects, then you have discovered the true meaning of wellness.

Affirmation: "I am ill to live and fit to love."

Love and light!

Remote viewing known since biblical times

(Art Bio)

THE PRACTICE OF REMOTE VIEWING OR reading clairvoyance, as I said in last week's column, boasts an all-consuming array of Western science—only the name is. In fact, a good example of it can be found in the Christian Bible itself.

Chapter 5 of the Book of Kings 2 tells the story of how the prophet Elisha "saw" what his servant Gehazi did outside his house without being there. According to the Biblical story, the commander of the King of Aram's army, Naaman, suffered from leprosy and was willing to give his great wealth to anyone who could cure him. A servant told him that a prophet of the Lord named Elisha in the land of Israel could help him. So he went with his horses and chariots to Elisha, who told him to wash himself in the River of Jordan seven times and his leprosy would be gone. He was at first reluctant to do so because it sounded ridiculous to him, but was later persuaded to do it. As soon as he finished washing in the fourteen river the seventh time, his leprosy was miraculously cured and his skin returned to normal.

So Naaman offered Elisha a present but Elisha refused no matter how strongly Naaman persuaded him to accept it. So Naaman thanked Elisha and left with his chariots and horses. Unknown to them, Elisha's servant Gehazi found everything and said to himself that his master's guest should not get away without getting something from him. So he ran after Naaman and his men outside the gate of Elisha's house.

When Naaman saw somebody running after him, he stopped his chariot and asked Gehazi what was wrong. Gehazi told a lie and said to Naaman that his master sent him to say that two prophets from another land just came and they needed "a talent of silver and two changes of clothing."

Naaman was only too glad to oblige and gave Gehazi "two talents of silver in two bags with changes of clothing."

When Gehazi returned to the house, Elisha asked him where he had been. Gehazi lied again and replied, "Your servant has not gone anywhere at all."

But Elisha said to him, "Did I not go with you in spirit when someone left his chariot to meet you? Is this a time to accept money and to accept clothing, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen and male and female slaves?" Therefore," Elisha said, "the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants." And immediately Gehazi became leprous, as white as snow. (Source: The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version)

The above story is clearly a case of remote viewing because Elisha saw what his servant Gehazi did at a distance without being there. This could also be a case of astral projection, which sometimes happens during a remote-viewing exercise.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

The most remarkable case of remote viewing I found happened in the 18th century and was told by no less than the eminent and highly respected Swiss psychologist Carl G. Jung in his book "Psychology and the Occult" as translated by R.F.C. Hull. This story was verified and scrutinized not by the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant. I shall merely summarize the story here to save space.

On a Saturday afternoon in late 1759, Emanuel Swedenborg, the well-known Swedish mystic and seer, was invited by a friend to a party in Gothenburg, about 50 miles from Stockholm where Swedenborg lived.

Two hours later, at 6 p.m., Swedenborg went out of his friend's house and announced that a terrible fire had broken out near his neighborhood. He said the house of one of his friends had already been burned and his own house was in danger. He went out several times to check on the progress of the fire, which was not visible from where he was at the time. At 8 p.m., Swedenborg gave a sigh of relief and announced the fire had been extinguished just three houses away from his.

The other guests were of course puzzled as what Swedenborg was talking about. The governor of the city was told that evening what Swedenborg had seen, and the next day, Sunday, he was questioned by the governor about what he saw. Swedenborg, according to the testimony made by Retzi, "described the fire precisely, how it had begun and to what manner it had ceased and how long it had continued."

The official intelligence report released on Tuesday and submitted to the governor confirmed in detail what Swedenborg had told the governor about the fire, including the exact time the fire was put out...to a t.

What the guests witnessed at the party in 18th-century Sweden was clearly a case of remote viewing or the ability to project one's awareness or consciousness to a distant place and describe it accurately. It is not a modern phenomenon but is as old as ancient history. The SEI scientists merely confirmed such ability exists in most people and gave it a scientific name.

Note: The next Intuitonetics Harness & Awareness seminar will be held Jan. 23, Saturday, 1-7 p.m., at Rm. 308 Philcox Plaza 1 Cond., Legaspi St., Greenhills, Mandaluyong. Call 8135245. Inquire 09189806756 for details, e-mail jaimelicauco@yahoo.com.

What is spiritual DNA?

By Liz Bernardo

EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN UNIQUE spiritual DNA, and the most exciting part of the spiritual journey is discovering what DNA is. We are truly mind and soul. Our physical being is made up of DNA. So is our soul.

One soul has its own blueprint. It is who that soul is. It is the embodiment of the spirit, the essence of who you are and who you are meant to be. Some refer to it as akashic records. I like to compare it to our DNA strands. It is who we are after all. It is our spiritual DNA. Our spiritual DNA is our blueprint; it contains our soul's memory bank as well as its purpose.

Our soul is created and evolutionary. It has incarnated over several lifetimes and is still incarnate for many more. It may do so as human incarnations or as it ascends in may move on to spiritual entities. The soul is not limited. As souls evolve and ascend, each it its own spiritual DNA. From its conception, from its creation, the soul holds in it its truest purpose. Whether it is a lifetime as a human being here on earth or some other place or whether it becomes a spirit guide or elemental. Each lifetime, each experience is recorded and retained by the soul.

Just as our physical and unusual characteristics recorded in our physical DNA, our spiritual parts and our soul purposes are recorded in our spiritual DNA. As such, each of us has a specific spiritual purpose. Each of us has our own spiritual DNA. Therefore, there is no other two parts in spirituality. This is to become each spiritual DNA is unique. Each and every soul has its own spiritual purpose. Which is why the purpose of spirituality on a human level is to discover one's own guidance directly from the source. I call him God, but he is known by many names. The spiritual journey is, in my opinion, the most wonderful journey you will take.

If you have read this far, you are most definitely experiencing your spiritual path. The soul is so complex, so full of wisdom and we cannot second guess why it makes the choices it does. Yet it is on a higher self, our highest purpose, it is the reason we are here. It is the reason we have incarnated in our present form. It is part of you. It is you. It is not separate from you. It is part of our human journey to experience the mind over the ego. This is what sets us apart from our souls, our higher selves.

When we silence the mind, we silence the ego. When the ego is turned (not switched) to on, it is acknowledged and moved aside, we experience the soul. Spiritual practice silences the ego. It enables you to see, feel and experience the higher self, which is your soul. This is the reason we need more than one lifetime to experience the fullness of humanity. Imagine souls experience the mind to on, it is all its "world-brain" for lack of a better word. As we go through life, times, we grow and learn from our experiences and evolve on a spiritual level. Yet other souls come from a higher spiritual plane and incarnate as humans to help others on their journey.

Reprinted from Cosmo Magazine.

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YOGA WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
Guy Pina will conduct Talisay: Sob [illegible] yoga on Jan. 9-10 at 17 Bandia St., South Forbes, Makati City. Call Sissa Tavasher at 0917-8474168 or e-mail sheenkas@yahoo.com. Ayoga workshop will be held in March 20 to 21 in Silay, Palawan. Check schedules on www.talisay.com. To register, e-mail talisay@gmail.com.

Win a race date with Gaby dela Merced

GUAM. THE LATEST EVOLUTION OF the Gaby Zone online racing game, gives avid racers with higher difficulty levels. Sweet hearts and exciting new game features. To pump up the race experience, Level Up Games is upping the ante with an in-game promo that gives players a chance to win a race date with top female racer and GUAM endorser Gaby dela Merced plus a brand new Acer laptop.

A much sought after personality for her racing, modeling and TV gamings, Gaby is one of the few Filipinas to dominate the Asian Formula 3 circuit. "It's exciting to be part of GUAM, not only because I love racing but because I've gamer myself. This game is a thrill to play; it brings out the virtual fun that you can similarly get in the race tracks."

Win a Race Date with Gaby is an in-game raffle for players of GUAM. To qualify, players need to reach level 40 before Jan. 15. The game is downloadable for free at http://racegaby.level upgames.ph/download.php. Upon download, simply register an account and start playing to reach level 40.

GUAM's seven players to more hair-raising twists and turns as more challenging stages, a boss/chase battle, more game levels, races like the race team formation system, quest system and even a marriage system. According to Jeff Benitez, brand manager of GUAM, it gives online racing game players a unique MMO experience not found in other racing games.

ENTERTAINMENT

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JC de Vera

THE YEAR 2009 was a stressful, roller-coaster ride for me. But I'm ending it well with a new show, "Sana Ngayong Pasko." I hope the good luck will continue in 2010. Since I already have a new car (a black Subaru Legacy 2010), my biggest wish is to have my house. I also wish that my family would remain united, happy and successful. For the Philippines, my wish is for Filipinos to become more disciplined. Bayani Fernando and Edgar Allan

Surely the coolest job in the world

By Pachala Concepcion
Photos by Nino Jose Erbiti

THE BEST JOBS IN THE WORLD ARE those that don't feel like work.

Being a DJ makes the grade, as Janine Marie Ramirez and Nel Gomez, the newest video jocks hired by music channel Hija, illustrated during a recent visit to the bizarre.

Although Janine, 24, and Nel, 19, regularly watched Hija and were aware of the show's past VJ searches, it was just this past time they both decided to try out.

Only a few months on the job, Janine admitted she had a lot more to learn, while Nel said he still felt awkward reading from a teleprompter. They couldn't deny, however, that "it's so much fun to play ourselves on camera, talk about bands, music...and get paid for it."

TAKE FIVE

Did you expect to win?

Janine: No (giggles).

Nel: It was hard to determine who would win among the guys, but among the girls, we were unanimous in thinking that it would be Janine. She has a unique personality. She's crazy.

Janine: Crazy, cute wild ha. Just wacky.

Like how wacky?

Janine: When I was asked what I liked doing, I brought out a huge basic and pretended the camera was my dog, to demonstrate my love of horror movies. I brought a rope and acted like a creepy creature. I also like coloring pasalubong. So I had a Barbie book and wore huge glasses. It was very melodrama.

Do you have any acting experience?

Janine: Just school plays ... But I've done some TV commercials. It was fun, that kind of acting, you're just expressing.

Nel, can you talk about your theater experience?

I was 14 when I made it to the cast of [the local production of] "High School Musical" which starred Sam Concepcion. I auditioned just for the heck of it. That's when I realized that I like singing and dancing.

Hija is known for giving many exposures to Pinoy artists. Do you have any favorites?

Janine: I started liking Sugarfree, especially when the "Bati ng Saklay" video came out. Growing up, there was always music in the house because my dad [Louie Ramirez] had a band [Overdrive]. I got to learn about Rance

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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

"I'M very nice [pic] so I can be a self-wary bimbo," says Jessica.

"I WANT to record an album before I'm 21," says Mel.

Surely ...

It was page B 1

luck, Wolfgang, of course. Filmmakers, Frenchmen. How it's Rainbow, Uduandah, Ep Libertea Iroon.

Mel: I like Hip-shock because it's the first that fits your running suit and hip hop.

What's the difference between Mtv and MTV?

Mel: Mtv plays music that people want to listen. MTV plays whatever I own.

Jessica: The ceiling before 'ah have them and countdowns on Mtv where the audience gets to vote.

What can you offer the Mtv audience? How do you see yourself on TV?

Jessica: Eye candy. Be participating!

Mel: Sa'yo. Be friends, going dudes, who are very close to the TV audience.

Jessica: The song got it really is actor-Any videos well, to speak well, be knowledgeable about the music. But people are searching this so they also want to be entertained.

Are you allowed to improvise in your scripts?

Jessica: If I or Sel get to and something new about a certain kind, on one say it, so there's a lot of free-dom. We've just given a guide, just in case [we] get lost).

How long are your contracts?

Mel: Six months, with options to renew.

Jessica: It we react the standards, then we stay. That keeps us on our toes.

Is the pay good enough?

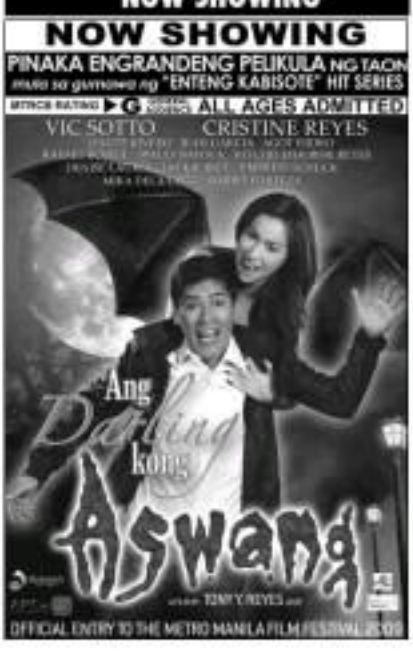
Jessica: It's enough. Its very hotspot so I can live off very little, actually.

Mel: It's our first job technically so like, OK, I'll take whatever I can get.

Becoming a VJ is really a dream for some people. Do you dream about other things?

Jessica: I want to try living in another country like ground-mother a French so I was thinking of studying French and Italian.

Mel: I want to record an album when I'm 21...because Michael Jackson was that age when he did "Off the Wall."



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1 RESERVE
2 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 ANG PANDAY
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 MAMO PO II
7 MAPAKAMAN
8 LOVE YOU GOODBYE
9 RESERVE
10 RESERVE

MANILA

1 MAPAKAMAN
2 MAMO PO II
3 ANG PANDAY
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
7 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

METRO EAST

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 ANG PANDAY
5 MAMO PO II
6 MAPAKAMAN
7 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
8 RESERVE

NOVALICHES

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 MAPAKAMAN
3 MAMO PO II
4 ANG PANDAY

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 MAPAKAMAN
3 MAMO PO II
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG

STA. ROSA

1 ANG PANDAY
2 MAMO PO II
3 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
4 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

LIPA

1 ANG PANDAY
2 MAMO PO II
3 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG

DASMARINAS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 ANG PANDAY
3 MAMO PO II
4 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
5 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

STARMILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 MAPAKAMAN
3 MAMO PO II
4 ANG PANDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

IMUS

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
4 MAMO PO II
5 MAPAKAMAN
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

ANGELES

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 ANG PANDAY
3 MAMO PO II
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG

TACLOBAN

1 MAMO PO II
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 ANG PANDAY

DUMAGUETE

1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 MAMO PO II
3 ANG PANDAY

BACOLOD

1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MAMO PO II
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
6 ANG PANDAY

ILOILO

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 MAMO PO II
4 ANG PANDAY
5 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

GENSAN

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2 MAMO PO II
3 ANG PANDAY
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Tourism envoy's dilemma: How to say RP is peaceful

By Aveena Sabina
Manila Jan Sales Patajan

JANAYE QUINO IS BELIEVE that there is no resistant competition in the Miss Tourism International pageant, but many pressing issues concern her.

Aside from the task of bringing back the tourists to the country, the 2009 Hiyas ng Pilipinas International titleholder will also have to quell negative reports about the Philippines as she competes in the Malaysia-based fill.

Since the pageant is was last crowned, Janaye said she will promote the Philippines as a peaceful place. "I will tell everyone that only certain areas, particularly Maguindanao, are affected by recent incidents of violence."

The 23-year-old native of Pulilan told the beauties during last-minute lunch at the Manila Lyol Carey House in The Podium, Ortigas Center, "I will invite people to visit various destinations in the Philippines, among them the underground river in Puerto Princesa City, which is now considered one of the seven wonders of nature."

Besides Malaysia is a Muslim country, the oft-touted swimsuit parade featured in other pageants is not a part of Miss Tourism International. Janaye joined, "I don't have qualms about that much."

Reader Montano won the title for the country in 2008. Last year's representative, Jean Isberg, made it to the semifinals. Jean and Janaye competed in the 2008 Binibining Pilipinas-Pacific Princess City. Jean was proclaimed Hiyas ng Pilipinas Tourism.

Good and ready

"I didn't expect it. I also got a chance to compete international," confessed Janaye, an architecture graduate of the Polytechnic University. The Bikol-ngenious decided to send her because she was not able to compete internationally during her reign. One of the recent winners, Jacqueline Hechanova, was sent to the 2009 Miss International as a pageant. Jane Basnera, the other 2009 national winner, has not known as international assignments.

Janaye was informed about the Malaysian title only after she was crowned her title—in the 2009 Hiyas—beats held August in Asia-Japanese.

"I have been preparing myself emotionally, mentally and physically since then," she said. "I am ready," said Janaye, by way of declaring her readiness for the big league.

The Hiyas pageant was not her first beauty contest. She hopes to display on the line in her first international competition.

Janaye left last week for Malaysia, where she is expected to compete against 45 others. Coronation night is Oct. 31.

JENAYE QUINO: The "undiplomat" in competes was a pharmacist competes.

New Year resolutions for top celebrities

AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO 2010, we all promise ourselves to do more and do better than we did this year. That's what New Year's resolutions are for, even if we end up not fulfilling them most of the time.

So that as it may, it's always good to have a goal. It's better to fail at trying something than to succeed in doing nothing. With that in mind, I asked some celebrities what their New Year's resolutions are.

Have you thought of yours? Maybe a few of the most cited resolutions make one forget to take time to smell the roses along the way. Whatever you aim for in 2010, may you welcome the fear of the Tiger with a roar of rapture—and not sadness—antiquation. Live it up and go fearlessness!

CESAR MONTANO: "To keep my wife each morning I wake up and whisper to her six, I love you."

SUPERBOB CRUZ: "To be able to wake up earlier than Bubuy so I could prepare yummy breakfast for him every morning."

MEGASTAR: "To share my blessings with the less fortunate and strive to be better in work."

DIETER OCAMPO: "To learn the lyrics' part behind and take on the valuable lessons on it and enjoy the present while looking forward to the future."

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

RUBY MOE QUINTO: "I will simplify my life by striving to make it unimportant and meaningless my relationship with the Lord."

MIRIAM DIVAMBAO: "To be more grateful, positive and joyful. I wanna be healthier so I plan to exercise regularly and take up running as a sport. I also aim to be more patented and give my heart to my careers, business and relationships."

ELSERIE DOMINGO: "For the 10th time, my New Year's resolution is to prosper! and stay fit!"

ALFRED BARRAS: "I will strive for better times ahead!"

LUIZ MAGALONA: "I will try to get more hours of sleep daily!"

PHOEMELA BARANDA: "To be more focused on my goals. I also aim to have a healthier lifestyle."

CHRISTINE REYES: "Resort to be less anxious for the opposite sex!"

JON AVILA: "To have more time for family."

ROLAN PAPAS: "I will try to improve on the things that will help me in my career and in being a good family man."

ROSANNA ROMAINES: "Less wine and more exercise."

PAOLO SANTOS: "Stop! According to my ladies in love, don't buy what you don't need and don't need what you can't buy."

E-mail: wearingthebestthings@yahoo.com

Piolo Pascual takes top OPM slot

THE BESTSELLING ALBUMS IN THE Philippines for the week Dec. 14-20, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's nationwide sales reports:

OPM

1) "Twinkle," Piolo Pascual, Star Records; 2) "Romance Revisited (The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Exclusive Mirror One Edition)," Universal Records; 3) "The Antidote," Silverado, BGM Music; 4) "Your Christmas Gift," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 5) "Kasal Na Mga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 6) "Pendulum of the Soul," Basa, Ibarra Music; 7) Christmas Dance & Thom Rhinedell, Synergy Music; 8) "Music is Me," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 9) "Christmas in Our Hearts," Jose Mari Chan, Universal Records; 10) "Pray The Rhythms of The Holy Beauty," Various Artists, Star Records

Overall

1) "My Christmas," Anders Bovell, BGM Music; 2) "Twinkle," Piolo Pascual, Star Records; 3) "Romance Revisited (The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Exclusive Mirror One Edition)," Universal Records; 4) "The Apparition," Silverado, BGM Music; 5) "The Point Monsters," Lady Gaga, BGM Music; 6) "Pendulum of the Soul," Basa, Ibarra Music; 7) "Your Christmas Gift," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 8) "I Dreamed a Dream," Susan Boyle, Sony Music; 10) "Kasal Na Mga,"